

**Themes on
Linguistic Diversity
Encountered in the
Plenary Debates of
the European
Parliament
2000 - 2003**



**THEMES ON LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY
ENCOUNTERED IN THE PLENARY
DEBATES OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT 2000 – 2003**

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on contributions – oral and written – on the topic of linguistic diversity made by Members of the European Parliament during the plenary sessions from 2000 to 2003 inclusive and analyses the attitudes expressed by Members towards the concept of linguistic diversity, particularly as it applies to the national languages and the regional autochthonous languages of Member States. The analysis is set within a framework consisting of contemporary academic work and the classic work by Johann Gottfried von Herder and the German *Philosophen*.

The European Year of Languages 2001 was widely supported by the European Commission; but an important question seemed to be what significance, if any, did maintaining linguistic diversity have for Members of the European Parliament in the years immediately following 2001. This research set out to discover to what extent issues related to linguistic diversity were given expression to in the plenary debates from 2000 to 2003, the years corresponding essentially to the fifth parliamentary term. Was only lip service paid to linguistic diversity in the years 2000 – 2003? Or did the European Year of Languages focus the attention of parliamentarians from all political groups in an ongoing way on issues of language use and preservation in the European Union, especially since the Union was to be significantly enlarged by the addition of ten Member States on January 1, 2004?

Did the MEPs recognise that there were social and economic benefits accruing from pursuing policies of linguistic diversity? How important was linguistic diversity to the essence of the European Union in the eyes of its Members of Parliament? To what extent did MEPs espouse the use of just one language as a preferred method of communication in and around the Parliament? How much respect was there for the regional and minority indigenous languages of the European Union? Did MEPs regard linguistic diversity as an important consideration in determining the suitability of other countries seeking accession? The research reviews the response from the Commission in subsequent years to the views articulated by the MEPs. Finally, are there lessons in any of this for New Zealand?

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Setting the Context

The matter of language and identity is not out of the news for long in the European Union, even if the circumstances are not always like those that culminated in the dramatic events at a football stadium in Dunajská Streda/Dunaszerdahely late in 2008.

On the first day of November in that year, in Dunajská Streda/Dunaszerdahely, a city of 20,000 and the centre of Slovakia's Hungarian minority, which totals some 650,000, a football match was being played between a team from the Slovak capital Bratislava and one from Dunajská Streda/Dunaszerdahely. The game came to an abrupt halt after just seventeen minutes when Slovakian police officers started attacking Hungarian fans. Busloads of ethnic Hungarian football fans and neo-Nazis had travelled to the game in southern Slovakia. The incidents on that day, which led to considerable strain in the relationship between the Slovak and Hungarian governments, appear to be related to the Bratislava-based government wanting to limit the rights of the Hungarian minority. At least, that is how the Hungarian minority interpret events such as the removal of Hungarian place names and their replacement with Slovak equivalents and the decision by the government to order the use of geography textbooks that contain the names of towns and cities in Slovakian even though the rest of the text is in Hungarian. Gábor Hulkó, deputy mayor of Dunajská Streda/Dunaszerdahely, says people are being radicalised and are growing more nationalistic on both sides, and Oliver Ibolya, principal of a Hungarian school in the city, says that the Slovakian Government is 'trying to kill our language'. "If the language disappears, so does the nation's identity," he told Deutsche Welle Television.¹

On 8 October 2008, Hungary had lodged a complaint with the European Parliament over the same issue of place names in Slovakian in textbooks that were written for the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. The Slovak Minister of Education decided in January of 2008 that place names were to appear only in the official state language despite a government council for minorities putting forward a compromise of bilingual place names. The daily newspaper, *Sme*, editorialised that the ‘minority can only defend their rights if they manage to convince a majority of Slovak society, the media and politicians of their cause’.² However, there was a change of heart in the government following the incidents at Dunajská Streda and Prime Minister Robert Fico promised, as reported in the *Slovak Spectator*³, that Hungarian place names would be allowed in textbooks provided they were followed by the Slovak equivalent. Then, on 3 December, the largest political party in Slovakia’s ruling coalition, Smer, joined with opposition parties in parliament to pass an amendment allowing place names to be provided in the minority language plus the state language.⁴

In the area around Brussels, language issues are taken very seriously all the time. It was reported earlier in 2008⁵ that a restaurant in the municipality of Overijse with a neon sign reading “Thai takeaway” was sent a reminder from the local council that the commune was Flemish and the official language Dutch. The restaurant was also requested to greet customers in Dutch instead of in French. Non-Dutch billboards in the area frequently suffer the fate, the report continued, of being spray-painted “Nederlands” by militant groups such as the Taal Aktie Komitee [TAK].

In September 2008, the French Education Minister, Xavier Darcos, caused a “storm” with his reported announcement of plans⁶ to offer free classes in English during the French school holidays in 2009. He was unrepentant, saying that it was a “handicap” to speak poor English and that speaking fluent English was the key to success. This followed another row involving the use of English language lyrics in the official French entry in the 2008 Eurovision song contest. The French Member of Parliament who led that protest, Jaques Myard, a member of France’s ruling Union for a Popular Movement Party, did not want France to “monkey another’s culture”.⁷

Meanwhile, in Italy the Dante Alighieri Society proclaimed that Italians wanted their language to receive more respect.⁸ This was the conclusion the Society had arrived at

following a four-month public opinion survey on its website regarding over-used foreign words. It was a survey conducted, according to the report, as part of the Dante Alighieri Society's campaign 'to ensure Italian remains a key language in the workings' of the European Union.

Does all the debate and disputation about identity and linguistic diversity going on among people in the European Union simply amount to a fuss about nothing? Does what language a citizen of Barcelona or Arles, or Paris or Prague may use really matter anyway?

Well, the words of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o⁹ ring out loudly: 'The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe'. The British linguist David Crystal emphasises that language lies at the heart of what it means to be human.¹⁰

Just over forty years ago, Marshall McLuhan wrote:

'The old civic, state, and national groupings have become unworkable. Nothing can be further from the spirit of the new technology than "a place for everything and everything in its place." You can't go home again.'

'In an electric information environment, minority groups can no longer be contained – ignored. Too many people know too much about each other. Our new environment compels commitment and participation.'

'The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village.'¹¹

These prophetic words of McLuhan provide a reference point for any consideration of language use in the European Union, or anywhere else for that matter, today and in the future. The message of electric circuitry, according to McLuhan, is *Total Change*, ending psychic, social, economic, and political parochialism.

In 2008, yet another book, this one edited by Australian linguist Peter Austin, entitled "One Thousand Languages: Living, Endangered and Lost" was published,¹² which addressed the matter of the survival of languages in today's electronic age and

whether children should be brought up using a dominant language. Often recounted has been the story of Ned Mandrell who, when he died in 1974, was the last native speaker of the Manx language, a close relative of Irish and Scots Gaelic. Nettle and Romaine¹³ have written that only one hundred years earlier, not long before his birth, twelve thousand people actually spoke Manx. Nettle and Romaine assert that the extinction of languages is ‘part of the larger picture of worldwide near total ecosystem collapse’. In terms very similar to those used by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and others in the academic literature (see Chapter Two below), they write:

‘Our research shows quite striking correlations between areas of biodiversity and areas of highest linguistic diversity, allowing us to talk about a common repository of what we will call “biolinguistic diversity”: the rich spectrum of life encompassing all the earth’s species of plants and animals along with human cultures and their languages.’¹⁴

They posit that everywhere a few languages have been able to become associated with economically powerful groups and make themselves metropolitan, whereas other languages have been ‘consigned to peripheral status, and their speakers have often faced up to a stark choice between retaining their original identity and seeking to get on in the world’.¹⁵ For intergenerational reproduction of language to succeed, the key is to confer power on people: ‘It is political, geographical, and economic factors which support the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity. These need to be considered holistically, as part of an ecology of language, an approach that sees language as part of the larger natural environment.’¹⁶

It has been written that the modern European nation-states that emerged in the nineteenth century were based on the principle of one national language.¹⁷ Fast forward about one hundred and fifty years and 2001 was declared the Year of Languages in Europe. So what did the oral and written contributions by Members of the European Parliament to the plenary debates between 2000 and 2003 reveal about their attitude to issues of linguistic diversity? Did what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o proclaims to be axiomatic, namely that a people’s choice of language is central to a people’s definition of themselves, resonate with those who contributed to the plenary debates of the European Parliament between 2000 and 2003?

Chapter One sets out the subject matter of this thesis and outlines the method of research employed. The significance of the terms “official” and “working” languages is introduced. In addition, the administrative components of the European Union are described and reference is made to the historical philosophical literature on the issue of linguistic diversity in Europe.

Chapter Two explores the current academic debate surrounding issues of linguistic diversity per se and especially what the academic literature has to say about linguistic diversity in the European Union about the time of the fifth parliamentary term.

Chapter Three details what Members of the European Parliament between 2000 and 2003 considered to be the social and economic benefits that accrue from the learning of a language additional to one’s own mother tongue. This chapter determines whether there was support for and encouragement of foreign language learning forthcoming from Members, and whether Members believed that the learning of foreign languages was not only key to better communication among people and to enhanced mobility of labour and goods but also the key to respecting other peoples’ cultures. How important was cultural diversity to the essence of the European Union in the eyes of its Members of Parliament? Did Members, for example, see the learning of other languages as providing some sort of bulwark against xenophobia, racism and intolerance?

Chapter Four probes to what extent Members of the European Parliament espoused the use of just one language as a preferred method of communication in and around the Parliament or by the Commission or the other institutions of the European Union. Was the use of a lingua franca within Parliament’s Chamber supported at all or were Members determined that the existing policy at the time of “official” and “working” languages continue?

Chapter Five is a search to gauge to what extent there was respect for the regional and minority indigenous languages among the Members of the European Parliament or the Political Groups from 2000 to 2003. The same chapter canvasses whether oral or written protests were made during the plenary debates against the treatment accorded those regional and minority indigenous languages by Member States. The question is

asked whether Members of the European Parliament were keen to embrace action against “offending” Member States and whether the European Commission proved a ready ally for the “protesters”.

Chapter Six investigates what the Members of Parliament had to say during the plenary debates about issues surrounding linguistic diversity in those countries seeking to become full members of the European Union. Particular attention is paid to the parliamentary exchanges concerning the prevailing conditions in the Baltic States and in Slovakia, which were expected to accede in 2004. The chapter attempts to determine whether a higher standard on this matter was demanded of countries seeking accession than was demanded of the current Member States.

Finally, Chapter Seven draws together the conclusions resulting from the research undertaken and considers whether whatever impetus was given to linguistic diversity in the European Union by the Year of Languages 2001 has continued since the fifth parliamentary term ended. This last chapter also raises some wider questions which emerge from a study of the plenary debates and whether there might be any lessons in the content of those debates for a country such as New Zealand.

Research Methods

This thesis addresses language policies, attitudes to language policies, and legislation bearing on language use in the European Union. In particular, it focuses on the utterances on the topic of linguistic diversity expressed by Members of the European Parliament in that parliament from 2000 to 2003 inclusive.

This research analyses the attitudes expressed by Members of the European Parliament in the plenary debates towards the concept of linguistic diversity, particularly as it applies to autochthonous minorities. The analysis is set within a framework consisting of contemporary academic work and the classic work by Johann Gottfried von Herder and the German *Philosophen*.

Why was the time-span 2000 to 2003 chosen for this research? The European Year of Languages was widely supported in principle; but the important question is what significance, if any, did maintaining linguistic diversity have for Members of the European Parliament in the years immediately following 2001. This research sets out to discover whether issues related to linguistic diversity were given expression to in the Parliament's plenary sessions from 2000 to 2003, the years corresponding essentially to the fifth parliamentary term of the European Union. Was only lip service paid to linguistic diversity in the years 2000 – 2003? Or did the European Year of Languages focus the attention of all parliamentarians in an ongoing way on issues of language use and preservation in the European Union, especially since the Union was to be significantly enlarged by the addition of ten Member States on January 1, 2004?

There were twelve plenary sessions (or to use the technically correct term “part-sessions”) of the European Parliament held each year in Strasbourg with additional plenary sessions taking place in Brussels. During 2000, Friday sittings ceased so that each Strasbourg session lasted only three and a half days. The reduced time available for debates resulted in making those plenary sessions even more formal. The plenary sessions were very important, nonetheless, because while most of the “work” was done in committees any decisions made in those committees had to obtain the formal approval of the European Parliament in plenary session before they could be enacted. There was a public record of proceedings in the plenary sessions. There was no such public record of debates inside a committee and those committee debates are *not* the subject matter of this thesis.

The source of the data researched for this thesis is the compilation of texts of speeches by Members of the European Parliament in plenary sitting known as the “Verbatim report of proceedings” (or “Compte Rendu in Extenso”).¹⁸ This report, which contained all the texts in the original languages, first appeared on the European Parliament's internet site <http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary> as soon as it became available. Then, about a month afterwards, all these original texts were translated into the official languages of the European Union. It is this particular version – original texts translated into the official languages – entitled *Debates*, as published on CD-ROM, which was researched.

As the European Parliament ‘Note to the Reader’ accompanying the CD-ROMs further explains, the CD-ROM’s search interface supported by the dtSearch engine (powered by dtSearch <http://www.dtsearch.com>) enables any researcher to access the data by title keyword or by full text keyword as well as by date or speaker. The name of the speaker, the political group to which the Member belongs, and the original language – in the case of translations – are all indicated at the beginning of each speech. The CD-ROMs may be obtained from the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities and its sales agents – see <http://www.publications.eu.int>. For this research loan copies of the CD-ROMs were obtained from the Auckland Public Library.

All the quotations from the plenary debates used in this thesis are the English translations as supplied on the CD-ROMs and no attempt has been made to check or verify the accuracy of these translations since the author of this thesis is not proficient in all fifteen (or as of 2008/2009 twenty three) official languages of the European Union.

The full text of all documents on the CD-ROMs was searched by the following:

- “language”
- “languages”
- “regional languages”
- “lesser used languages”
- “linguistic diversity”

In addition, the titles of the debates were searched by the word “languages”.

Having studied all of the nearly three thousand one hundred results to the above search words in the plenary debates, 552 oral and written items (or *verbali*) were selected from the plenary debates [**listed in Appendix 1**] as being relevant to the topic outlined above and as being worthy of detailed analysis.

Having surveyed the data set sourced from *Debates*, as published on CD-ROM, it is believed that there is no significant relationship between comments that are made orally or in writing. It is concluded for the purpose of this thesis that the 552 items (or

verballi) are of equal importance, irrespective of the form of their delivery. There appears no reason that would indicate they should be treated differently; accordingly, they have been treated alike.

The analysis included collation from among the 552 oral and written *verballi* of the following:

- The actors – and in the case of an elected Member of the European Parliament – the Member State represented
- The day of the week on which the speech or the written item was presented to the Parliament
- The political groupings that the actors in the debates on linguistic diversity belonged to
- The original language used by the actors in the debating chamber
- The subject matter of the contribution

The actors – and in the case of an elected Member of the European Parliament – the Member State represented. An answer was wanted to the question as to how many Members contributed to debates on linguistic diversity issues during the fifth parliamentary term. Was it a case of many different Members contributing occasionally or did the majority of contributions come from just a small number of Members who might have been regarded by other Members as zealots for or against linguistic diversity?

The composition of the European Parliament in its fifth term was the result of elections held between June 10 and 13 in 1999 in the then fifteen Member States of the European Union.¹⁹ These elections were held in accordance with the national legislation that existed in each of those Member States. For the first time *all fifteen* of the Member States adopted a system of proportional representation. European Union citizens who were resident in a Member State of which they were not nationals had the right to vote and to stand as a candidate on the same conditions as a national of that Member State.

There were essentially two different arrangements of electorates in the 1999 election:

- one national list of candidates – the system in Austria, Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden
- the country divided into electoral regions – the system in Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, United Kingdom

The number of MEPs representing each Member State and the voter turnout percentage in the 1999 elections are given in Table 1.1 –

Table 1.1 European Parliament elections 1999: Number of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) for each Member State, Population per MEP for each Member State, and voter turnout percentage in each Member State.

MEMBER STATE	NUMBER OF MEPs	POPULATION PER MEP	VOTER TURNOUT %
Germany	99	828,667	45
France	87	677,770	47
Italy	87	662,207	71
United Kingdom	87	681,000	24
Spain	64	615,531	64
Netherlands	31	508,387	30
Belgium	25	408,520	90
Greece	25	421,320	70
Portugal	25	399,200	40
Sweden	22	402,455	38
Austria	21	384,857	49
Denmark	16	332,063	50
Finland	16	322,500	30
Ireland	15	249,600	51
Luxembourg	6	71,500	86

Sources: European Parliament Committee Report 294.737 2001 and <http://www.ipu.org>

It would be simplistic for the below fifty per cent voter turnout in just over half of the Member States to be explained away by one single cause. Any one or more of apathy, indifference, ignorance or “voter fatigue” may account for the percentage as well might the proximity of the European election to the national election in a particular country. Of those countries with the highest voter turnout, it is worth noting that in Belgium, Greece and Luxembourg voting was compulsory - in name at least - and in Italy the Constitution there defined voting as being a “civic duty”.

Does the overall low voter turnout diminish public confidence in the European Parliament to effectively represent public opinion on any matter, including linguistic diversity? Whatever the answer may be to that question, analyses of the 1999 election itself and of the composition of the resulting European Parliament do *not* form the purpose of this thesis. Incidentally, 31 per cent of those elected in 1999 were women – ranging from 45.5 per cent in Sweden to 11.5 per cent in Italy. “Incidentally” because gender is *not* regarded as either a necessary or even important variable focus for analysing the issue of support for or opposition to linguistic diversity among the Members of Parliament as might have otherwise been the case had the issue to be analysed been one such as support for or opposition to paid maternity leave in the Parliament.

This thesis adopts the country codes for each Member State as used in European Parliament documents themselves.²⁰

The day of the week on which the speech or the written item was presented to the Parliament. This was worthy of consideration in so far as important business tended to be raised and debated in the early part of a week, as opposed to being brought up for consideration only on a Thursday or a Friday when many Members might be absent from the debating chamber.

The political groupings that the actors in the debates on linguistic diversity belonged to. While the voters in each Member State voted for European party programmes at the national level, the successful candidates operated in the European Parliament in transnational groupings which, it has been said, are ‘largely unknown to the electorates and in some cases are not even in existence at the time of the election itself’.²¹ In fact, the term “second-order” has been used to describe this type of election because the political issues belonging to each Member State and the regard in which the electorate held its government dominated the election in that Member State rather than any pan-European issues.²²

The Political Group system in existence during the fifth parliamentary term was based on the “party families” concept enshrined in Parliament’s Rule 29 whereby Members of a particular Group were deemed to share a political “affinity” with other Members

belonging to that Group. The creation of a Group meant that those actors who comprised that Group were affirming that they indeed shared a political affinity. For the fifth parliamentary term, the minimum numerical requirement for a Group to be constituted was twenty-nine if all the Members came from one Member State, twenty-three if they were from two of the Member States, eighteen if they were from three Member States but only fourteen if they came from four or more Member States. The force of Rule 29 was made very apparent during the fifth parliamentary term when in the plenary session of 14 September 1999 the Technical Group of Independent Members (TDI) was rejected because it did not have the required political “affinity” as set out in the Rule. That decision became fully effective when the existence of the TDI Group was formally terminated on 3 October 2001. After the disbandment, all but two of the affected Members reverted to Non-attached status.

The Political Group is very important to the running of the European Parliament. Not only is financial assistance given to a Group in the form of administrative, secretarial and accommodation support but the Groups decide Parliament’s leadership (President, Vice-Presidents, committee chairs, and committee *rapporteurs*) as well as Parliament’s agenda and the allocation of speaking times – which are strictly apportioned and rigidly enforced – in a debate.

The following abbreviations for political groupings appear in this thesis:

EDD = Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities

ELDR = Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party

GUE/NGL = Confederal Group of the European United Left / Nordic Green Left

NI = Non-attached

PPE-DE = Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

PSE = Group of the Party of European Socialists

TDI = Technical Group of Independent Members

UEN = Union for Europe of the Nations Group

Verts/ALE = Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

The largest Group numbers as a result of the 1999 election are shown in Table 1.2 –

Table 1.2 Political Groups resulting from the 1999 elections and as at 16 September 2002

POLITICAL GROUP	NUMBER OF MEPs as a result of the 1999 Election	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED as a result of the 1999 Election	NUMBER OF MEPs as at 16 September 2002	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED as at 16 September 2002
PPE-DE	233	15	234	15
PSE	180	15	175	15
ELDR	51	10	52	10
GUE/NGL	41	10	50	10
Verts/ALE	38	13	45	12
UEN	30	5	22	5
EDD	16	4	16	4
NI			32	6

Source: www.db.europarl.eu.int

The ELDR Group, under the leadership of the Irishman Pat Cox, entered into coalition straight after the 1999 election with the broad-based PPE-DE Group. Membership of the GUE/NGL increased during the fifth parliamentary term to fifty by 2002 as a result of defections from other Groups including the PSE whose own numbers dropped to 175. The number of Members in the Verts/ALE Group rose to forty-five during the same parliamentary term. Since 1981 ALE had been the “refuge” for political parties wanting greater regional autonomy or independence. The UEN Group, on the other hand, advocated respect for national sovereignty and opposed a “federal” Europe with its consequent loss of national identities. EDD was a new Group formed as a result of the 1999 election and they also opposed more European integration and centralisation. According to their website their political “affinity” was belief in a stable and democratic Europe of nation states built on the diversity and cultures of its people.

Consequently, by 16 September 2002, the Parliament, whose support for or opposition to issues of linguistic diversity is subject of this thesis, comprised a moderately

changed profile. See Table 1.2. Fifty per cent of the Non-attached Members were French while ten of them were Italian.

A key matter to be ascertained was whether all political groupings had speakers regularly contributing to these debates. Or were those from the acknowledged political left – GUE/NGL and PSE – chiefly represented in these debates as opposed to those from centre-left or centre-right groupings such as Verts/ALE, EDD, ELDR, and PPE-DE? In addition, what contribution was made by the political right grouping UEN, and did any of the TDI or NI Members contribute?

The original language used by the actors in the debating chamber. Matters to be ascertained included the following: Were the speakers of any particular language particularly prominent in these debates? In what manner were the debates on issues of linguistic diversity conducted? Was the tone of contributions to the debates moderate or impassioned? No objective measure of tone is possible with this type of data set, which comprises a written translation of, in the main, orally delivered speeches in a debating chamber. The official written translation cannot effectively indicate the tone of voice or the volume used by the speaker nor does it necessarily reflect the “flavour” of any emotive words used in the original delivery. If the data set were a recording, rather than a transcription, then judgements regarding tone might be possible. Did any Members use the indigenous minority languages spoken in their own country to reinforce the message they were giving to the Parliament? Abbreviations appear in Column Five of Appendix One to this thesis for each of the languages used during the plenary debates where such information is available.²³

The subject matter of the contribution. Originally, eleven strands were detected related to the research topic in the plenary debates from 2000 to 2003. These strands were:

- A demand that countries seeking accession protect the linguistic rights of minorities;
- Encouragement of language learning;
- The belief that acquisition of additional languages allows easier access to the labour and goods markets;
- The view that diversity is the essence of European Union “culture”;

- A defence of each Member State’s right to retain its own culture, identity and language;
- Support for regional and minority indigenous cultures and languages;
- Concern expressed at monolingualism in the European Parliament;
- The stated requests for important documents to be translated into all the official languages of a Member State;
- Opposing views on limiting the number of languages used in the translation of European Union documents;
- Protests voiced at one’s own country’s lack of action to promote indigenous minority languages; and
- Some support for one language as the language of the Parliament and the Commission.

However, having revisited the data, it became clear that not all the eleven themes originally detected were of equal significance, and, indeed, some were best combined to achieve a more appropriate in depth appreciation of the themes emerging from the plenary debates. Therefore, it is more appropriate to conclude that there are eight major recurring themes, as well as one minor theme, apparent in those debates:

1 – There was a clearly expressed demand that any countries seeking accession to the European Union (including those countries wanting to become treaty partners or wanting to become a party to association agreements) must protect the linguistic rights of minorities within their own country. This demand appeared from the debates to be non-negotiable.

2 – The encouragement of language learning was regarded as integral to respecting others’ cultures and would lead to better communication, along with the eradication of xenophobia, racism, and intolerance. Diversity *per se* was lauded in the debates as being desirable and the very essence of European Union “culture”, and any initiatives to prevent and combat discrimination were likewise hailed.

3 – An often-repeated theme was that the acquisition of additional languages would result in easier access for European Union citizens to the labour and goods markets and so facilitate the mobility of citizens within the European Union.

4 – Strong support was frequently expressed in the debates for regional and minority indigenous (autochthonous) languages and cultures.

5 – Some Members voiced protest at their own country's lack of action to promote indigenous (autochthonous) minority languages.

6 – There was evident in the plenary debates both support for and opposition to monolingualism in the European Parliament and/or the Commission from Members.

7 – Each Member State's right to retain its own culture, identity and language was defended by a number of the Members and this was linked with opposition to and, in some cases, support for limiting the number of languages used in the European Parliament and in the translation of European Union documents and in communications with European Union agencies.

8 – Some Members expressed the desire for important documents to be communicated in all the official languages of a Member State, including the co-official languages of a Member State.

9 – A comparatively minor theme to emerge was that residency of a Member State should not be dependent on knowledge of the language of that host country.

Language and the European Union

The starting point for any consideration of language use in the European Union is Article 290 of the consolidated version of the European Community Treaty which empowers the Council (of Ministers) when acting unanimously to determine the rules which govern the languages to be used in the institutions of the Union.

So it was that on 15 April 1958 the Council of Ministers, by means of Regulation 1, determined the languages which were to be used in the institutions of what was then called the European Economic Community. Amendments have been made since to

this Regulation as additional countries have acceded to the Treaty. This same Regulation 1 refers to “official” and to “working” languages. The decision as to which language is “official” is made by the Council upon the recommendation of each of the countries acceding to the Treaty who choose from among the languages spoken in each of those countries. Thus, *español* is the “official” language of Spain for the purposes of the European Union – not *catalán*, for example; and English is the “official” language of the United Kingdom, not Welsh or Scots Gaelic; whereas *nederlands* and *français* are “official” languages of Belgium. This language plan has been referred to (Liddicoat 2002: 22) as a ‘supra-national ratification of national language plans’ and it is pointed out that these arrangements, which were also included in the Maastricht Treaty (European Union 1992, Article 53), have become the norm for the European Union.

In theory, the “official” languages rank equally. It was claimed at the time (Wagner, Bech and Martinez 2002: 8) that officially, then, for texts published in all the official languages, there are not one original text and ten translations but eleven language versions or even eleven originals. By 2005 when the number of Member States had reached twenty-five, the number of “official” languages had increased to twenty. The assertion is that multiple authenticities not only safeguard the equal rights of all languages but also safeguard the national identity of all Member States. This belief in national identity harks back to the thoughts of Johann Gottfried von Herder (Refer to page 26 below), one of Europe’s most prominent architects of national consciousness, which was the source of many of Europe’s language conflicts which have emerged since the nineteenth century.

This concept of “equal rank” for the “official” languages, and the fundamental importance the European Parliament attached to it, was made clear by that parliament in the mid-1990s when it reaffirmed ‘that all of the Union’s official languages must be used on a strictly equal basis, wherever necessary, for all meetings of the European Parliament, whether they are used actively or passively, orally or in writing’ (European Parliament 1994, No.2). And again, a year later, it reaffirmed its ‘commitment to the equality of the official languages and the working languages of all the countries of the Union, which is a cornerstone of the concepts of a European

Union, of its philosophy and of the political equality of its Member States, and asserts that the different languages are one of the characteristics of European civilization and culture and an important aspect of Europe's diversity and cultural wealth' (European Parliament 1995, No. 1).

Articles 2 to 7 of Regulation 1 stipulate the rights not only of Member States but also of persons subject to the jurisdiction of a Member State. Member States and their citizens may write to any of the Union's institutions in the official language of their choice and are entitled to receive a reply in the same language – a right also now set out in Article 21 of the Treaty itself. Regulations and other documents of general application must be drafted in all the official languages (Article 4 of Regulation 1) and the *Official Journal* has to be published in all the official languages as well (Article 5). However, institutions, and particularly the Court of Justice, have the authority to determine which languages are to be used in specific cases (Articles 6, 7).

Furthermore, the European Union has also recognised a right for individuals to use their own language in, as has been put (*Liddicoat* 2002: 30), 'dealings with the European Parliament where that language is not an official language of the European Union, but is an official language in their own region'.

However, the internal work of the European Commission is conducted in fewer than the twenty "official" languages. The languages referred to in this context are the "working" languages. In 2001, at a time when there were eleven "official" languages, it was written (*van Els* 2001 : 320) : ' 'official' is a quality that each [European Union] language has and continues to have under all conditions; 'working language' is a quality that *may* be assigned to a language, but which it does not need to have under all conditions. As it has also been stipulated that each institute is to regulate its own language regime, provided that it is in accordance with the regulation of the Council of Ministers, there is now considerable diversity in language use practice ...As for internal communication within the individual [European Union] institutions, the eleven languages do not all equally qualify as working languages'. Van Els concluded (: 320) that the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament are 'the bodies that come closest to the 'ideal' situation in the sense that they use all the

‘official’ languages as ‘working languages’ on certain occasions’.

The concept of equal rank for the official languages was, of course, consistent with the very philosophy that gave rise to the European Community in the first place, namely the fervent hope to avoid another war engulfing Europe, with France and Germany again on different sides, and the desire that such a united Europe would be able to compete with the economic power of the United States of America. While thought might have been given at some stage to a single language which would assist and, indeed, hasten unification of the members, nevertheless from its inception in 1957 the Community settled for the equal rank of languages and has not formally deviated by way of legislation to the present time.

Indeed, the ideal of language diversity is celebrated by the European Parliament. In a Resolution passed on 12 December 2001 the Parliament stated, *inter alia*, that all European languages were of equal cultural value and were an integral part of the various European cultures. Furthermore, according to the Parliament, the official languages and the working languages of all the countries making up the Union were equal. It is significant that the same Resolution warned of the consequences if the number of “working” languages was to be reduced and asserted the Parliament’s determination to resist any discrimination between the official languages and the working languages. The democratic rights and the social rights of the citizens were at stake, nothing less, according to the Parliament.

The Resolutions of 1994, 1995 and 2001 referred to above are just three of many actions which the European Union and other agencies have taken to protect language rights. It has been asserted (*Extra and Yağmur* 2004: 89) that the overarching ideal of the European Union is to operate on the basis of common rights, responsibilities, and universal values such as democracy, freedom of speech, reign of law, and respect for human rights (and, obviously, human rights include linguistic rights).

In July 2000, the European Union adopted the concept of a *European Year of Languages* which was to take place in 2001. This concept had been devised (in collaboration with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural

Organisation) by the Council of Europe, an autonomous body comprising forty seven member countries and which is not to be confused with the Union's own Council of Ministers.

The principal aims for 2001 ²⁴ were essentially threefold:

- to increase the awareness of Europe's linguistic heritage and the openness to different languages and cultures as a source of mutual enrichment to be protected and promoted in European societies;
- to motivate European citizens to develop plurilingualism, that is, to achieve a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages, including those less widely used and taught, for improved mutual understanding, closer co-operation, and active participation in European democratic processes; and,
- to encourage and support lifelong language learning for personal development so that all European citizens could acquire the language competences necessary to respond to economic, social, and cultural changes in society.

The European Commission then set a number of even more far-reaching goals for 2001. Prominent among these aims (*Extra and Yağmur* 2004: 403) was to raise awareness of the richness of linguistic and cultural diversity within the European Union and the value in terms of civilisation and culture that they embodied, to acknowledge the principle that all languages must be recognised to have equal cultural value and dignity, and to encourage multiculturalism. Then the heads of state and government of all European Union Member States gathered in March 2002 in Barcelona and called upon the European Commission to take further action to promote multilingualism across Europe.

No one should be surprised by any of the above actions. The ideals of linguistic diversity were promoted at the highest level of the European Community – even from its inception – as is evident from this exhortation by Walter Hallstein, the first President of the European Commission (*Die Europäische Gemeinschaft* 1974). Switzerland is the role model to emulate, according to Hallstein; especially as linguistic diversity enriches rather than limits and provides incentives rather than obstacles:

Daß die Europäer nicht eine Sprache sprechen, kann uns nicht stören. Die Schweiz liefert uns das klassische Beispiel dafür, daß sprachliche Vielfalt nicht begrenzt, sondern bereichert, und wir wünschen unseren belgischen Freunden, daß sie bald als ein zweites Beispiel angeführt werden können. Die Mehrzahl der Sprachen ist kein Heimnis, sondern ein Ansporn. Die Erfahrungen mit unseren europäischen Beamten in Brüssel und in den gemeinsamen Forschungszentren von EURATOM beweisen es. [That the Europeans do not speak one language does not worry us. Switzerland provides the classic example of a situation in which linguistic variety does not present a limitation but rather it is enrichment. We wish that our friends in Belgium can soon be quoted as a second example. Multiplicity of languages is not an obstacle but an incentive. Experience with our European officials in Brussels and in the common research centres of EURATOM are proof of this.]

The European Parliament passed at least three resolutions in support of minorities – 1981 (Arfè Report I), 1983 (Arfè Report II) and 1994 (Killilea Report) – and, in addition, there were six-monthly meetings of an Intergroup for Minority Languages. There had been a budget line in the Commission funding projects in minority languages since 1983, the same year that the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages was legally established in Dublin and Brussels.

The policy of the European Union to prohibit discrimination by one member country against the citizens of another member country because they are speakers of the language of that other country has been interpreted (*Liddicoat* 2002: 31) as a negative rather than a positive right, the right not to be discriminated against, which does not equate with protection of an individual's or group's mother tongue. In referring to Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union – 'The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity' (European Union 2000) – it is said that this right is formulated as a negative right; for respecting diversity implies avoiding discrimination rather than the positive commitment to maintain and foster that diversity. It is also claimed (2002: 35) that the language policies of the European Union focus on democratic citizenship in the sense of integrating Europe and facilitating individual mobility within Europe and that, therefore, the emphasis is on language as a tool of communication, and the focus is placed on the official languages of the Union as the languages most suitable for achieving European Union objectives.

While it is true that the European Union's own documents declare that Europe's linguistic identity lies in its diversity, the real issue is how this diversity is going to be preserved in the short-term *and* guaranteed in the long-term in the face of the pressures coming from outside and also, increasingly, from within the European Union itself. It has been argued (Thierse 2004: 195) that the process of European unification is not in any way intended to bring about uniformity of individual cultures and languages but rather a heterogeneous, culturally and linguistically diverse Europe.

The great majority of academic commentators believe linguistic diversity is not just an ornament pleasing to behold but is the basis of the democratic future of Europe. The *Europa Diversa* group in its submission (Phillipson 2004: 59) to the Convention on the Future of Europe entitled "Linguistic proposals for the future of Europe" called for more active policies to strengthen linguistic diversity, for funding for all autochthonous European languages, for a public debate on reform of the language regime in European Union institutions and to ensure that power and self-regulation in language affairs should be as decentralized as possible. This last request makes reference to the principle of *subsidiarity* (Refer to page 23 and to page 59 below) which is one of the fundamental principles guiding decision-making processes within the European Union.

By the year 2000 there was already considerable pressure on translation services within the European Union and with ten additional Member States anticipated in 2004 that pressure would increase greatly. Financial costs were expected by Members of the European Parliament to escalate with the increasing time spent on providing the number of translations for documents and debates being demanded by Member States. This problem was exacerbated by the requirement to find appropriately qualified translators who would be competent to provide accurate translations. Because the issue is politically sensitive, a really serious analysis of how the present system operates in European Union institutions has yet to be undertaken.

Increasing use of the English language within the European Union had resulted in fears, whether justified or not, among some that not only regional languages but also national languages were in some way threatened. At the same time, the proponents of

some autochthonous languages were keen to advance their cause, relying on the Union doctrine of *subsidiarity* – the principle that decision-making should take place in the local area most affected by that decision. Furthermore, these proponents of regional minority indigenous languages would have been heartened by the 1996 *Euromosaic* Report that considered the importance of the economic ‘periphery’ to the ‘centre’ of the European Union of the future.

Language is still a matter of intense sensitivity not just to the French or to the Catalonians, but also, for example, to those recently joined Baltic members of the European Union – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Among non-Union states, linguistic nationalism has been a very contentious issue in Belarus, Romania and Moldova, to say nothing of its continuing role in the disintegration of the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

What constitutes the European Union today?

At the commencement of the fifth parliamentary term – whose plenary debates on the subject of linguistic diversity form the subject matter of this thesis – membership of the European Union comprised fifteen Member States. These States, with the year of accession in brackets, were: Belgium(1957), France (1957), [West] Germany (1957), Italy (1957), Luxembourg (1957), Netherlands (1957), Denmark (1973), Ireland (1973), United Kingdom (1973), Greece (1981), Portugal (1986), Spain (1986), Austria (1995), Finland (1995), and Sweden (1995). Subsequently, Cyprus (2004), Czech Republic (2004), Estonia (2004), Hungary (2004), Latvia (2004), Lithuania (2004), Malta (2004), Poland (2004), Slovakia (2004), Slovenia (2004), Bulgaria (2007) and Romania (2007) have become full Member States of the European Union.

[In 1990 the constituent *Länder* of the former East Germany acceded to the former West Germany and automatically became part of the European Union member state of Germany. Greenland, which was granted a degree of home rule by Denmark in 1979, left the European Union in 1985.]

The European Parliament is elected every five years by citizens of each the Member States to represent their interests. (The present Parliament, elected in June 2004, has 785 members from all twenty-seven European Union countries.) A main role of Parliament is to pass European laws. It shares this responsibility with the Council of the European Union, and proposals for new laws come from the European Commission. The Parliament and the Council share joint responsibility for approving the European Union's annual budget. Parliament has the power to dismiss the European Commission. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) do not sit in national blocks, but in Europe-wide political groups. While most of the meetings of the Parliament are held in Strasbourg, other meetings (one week per month) are held in Brussels.

The Council of the European Union — formerly known as the Council of Ministers — shares with Parliament the responsibility for passing laws and deciding policy. It also bears the main responsibility for the common foreign and security policy and for European Union action on some justice and freedom issues. The Council comprises cabinet ministers from the national governments of all the European Union Member States and its meetings are attended by whichever ministers are responsible for the items to be discussed — foreign ministers, ministers of finance and the economy, ministers of agriculture, for example — as appropriate. Each Member State has a number of votes in the Council reflective of the size of their population (but weighted in favour of smaller states). Decisions are usually by majority, although there are some areas which require unanimity. As many as four times each year the presidents and/or prime ministers of the Member States meet as the European Council to set the overall European Union direction.

The European Commission, consisting as of 2008/2009 of twenty-seven men and women — one from each Member State — and assisted by about twenty four thousand civil servants most of whom work in Brussels, represents and upholds the interests of Europe as a whole and is independent of national governments. The Commission drafts proposals for new European laws which are presented to the European Parliament and to the Council. Importantly, it manages the day-to-day business of implementing European Union policies and spending European Union funds. In its role as the watchdog to ensure that European laws and treaties are

observed, the European Commission can act against rule-breakers, taking them to the Court of Justice if this is seen appropriate. The President of the Commission is chosen by European Union governments and endorsed by the European Parliament. The other Commissioners are nominated by their national governments in consultation with the in-coming President and their nomination must be approved by the European Parliament. Once approved, the Commissioners do not represent the governments of their own country. Each Commissioner has responsibility for a particular policy area. The President and the members of the Commission are appointed for five years to broadly coincide with the period for which the European Parliament is elected.

The European Court of Justice which is located in Luxembourg and comprises one judge from each member country has as its role to ensure that European Union law is interpreted and applied in the same way in all European Union Member States. It ensures that national courts do not give different rulings on the same issue and makes sure that Member States do what the law requires them to do.

The Committee of the Regions, comprising 344 members who are often leaders of regional governments or city mayors, is consulted on prospective European Union decisions with a direct impact at the local or regional level in areas such as transport, employment or education.

In addition, there exist the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank, and a Court of Auditors.

The philosophical and historical literature on the language issue(s) in Europe — language the marker of nationality or essence (*Geist*)

‘Languages are the pedigree of nations’ – Samuel Johnson in his Preface to “A Dictionary of the English Language” 1755

The influence of linguistic nationalism must not be underestimated. Indeed, there are academic writers who have concluded that it has been a very powerful factor in

determining the language map of contemporary Europe.

All writers on the issue of linguistic diversity acknowledge how deeply linguistic nationalism was felt for almost two hundred years in many of the Member States. These concepts relate to the teachings of the *Philosophen*, the eighteenth and nineteenth century German Romantics such as Herder (1744-1803), Fichte (1762-1814), Hegel (1770-1831), Klopstock (1724-1803), Voss (1751-1826), Hamann (1730-1788), and von Humboldt (1767-1835) who argued that it was the *Volk* with its common roots and pre-existing characteristics, language, culture, history and religion that created the nation.

The philosophy and writings of the *Philosophen* became influential not only to the language decisions taken in France following the Revolution but to the very creation of the concept of “official” languages, the basis of language rules implemented in the European Community in 1957 and applied to this day. An understanding of the combined beliefs of these *Philosophen* is crucial to an understanding of the language tensions and conflicts that exist in the European Union of the twenty-first century.

Johann Gottfried von Herder was the most influential with regard to the combined concept of language and ethnicity. His view was that a person’s true homeland was that person’s language and his theories pre-dated Hegel’s concept of nationalism. Herder and Johann Fichte, who was born almost two decades later and whose *Reden an die deutsche Nation* was delivered in Berlin at the time it was occupied by Napoleon’s army, shared the view that what most clearly defined a nation was its language. So it came to be (*Barbour* 2000: 15) in the case of Germany, where the homeland was vast in comparison to most others and not well defined and the nation was sharply divided on religious lines, that a particular importance was given to the language as a unifying factor. The German view of language as absolutely crucial to nationalism became extremely influential, and even helped to introduce a linguistic element into national movements. Language came to be regarded as the repository for the nation’s uniqueness. Importantly, the cosmopolitanism and universalism of the Enlightenment were rejected so that for any group to preserve its specificity and survive as a discrete entity that group must preserve its own language and culture.

A German, therefore, came to be identified in terms of being a speaker of the German language. It has been asserted (*Wright* 2000a: 124) that difference in language reflected the natural divisions between nations and, therefore, linguistic diversity was, *per se*, good and any reduction of it harmful in its consequences for those who lost their link with the past. Herder believed that human civilisation lived in its 'national and peculiar manifestations' and Herder's beliefs became the dominant language philosophy of the era. It has been claimed (*Carmichael* 2000b: 286) that cultural nationalists in the latter half of the eighteenth century made the study of ethnicity into a branch of scientific knowledge, foremost among them being Herder.

A typically held view in the academic literature is that the late eighteenth century was a turning point or *Sattelzeit* or (*Burke* 2004: 164) even a second 'discovery of language', focused this time on unity, and linked to the discovery or 'invention' of the nation. This scholar readily acknowledges that Herder's description of a nation as a community held together by language, especially a spoken language, has become famous, as has his argument that dominant nations have ruled not so much by the sword as by 'the use of a more cultivated language'. However, Burke adds that Fichte went further in his equally famous assertion: 'Wherever a separate language can be found, there is also a separate nation which has the right to manage its affairs and rule itself.' (: 164)

The tradition of the national language doctrine had originated in Western Europe as a means for improving popular education which was intended to have the mother tongue of the people as its framework, but during the nineteenth century the concept of the national language became very much a political weapon. The evolution has been described this way (*Haarmann* 1991: 105): 'In this respect the idea of the national language as the unifying vehicle of a speech community was a philosophical "invention" of the eighteenth century that evolved into a political tool during the course of the nineteenth century'.

During the nineteenth and twentieth century the belief that nationhood and language were inseparable became the justification, it has been claimed (*Coulmas* 1991: 19), not merely for "purist" movements directed against the corruption of foreign language

influences such as in Germany but also for the repression of language minorities in Spain and France where Catalans and Basques, Bretons and Alsatians were thought to pose a threat to the integrity of the nation state. This academic has referred (1991: 18) to Herder's interpretation of language as a national treasure, as the embodiment of the spirit and as the deepest traits of a people to the extent that language cultivation was transformed from a social task into a patriotic task.

The power elites of the twentieth century in Europe, certainly at least for the first three quarters of that century, were not in any hurry to subscribe to, let alone allow to be implemented, Fichte's dictum that a separate language justified the existence of a separate nation entitled to self-determination of its own affairs.

Haarmann's 1991 article mentioned above (1991: 105) looks back to the nineteenth century and indicates the role played in the development of the doctrine of a "national language" by two German writers in that century. The article asserts that under the impression of the French occupation of Germany and of Napoleonic hegemony in Europe, the idea of language as *the* marker of nationality was further promoted until it became the dominating ideology of German Romanticism. Reference is made in the article to the adoption of romanticist ideas into political thought and practice as a further step in the evolution of the national language doctrine. Haarmann's thesis is that it laid the groundwork for the identification of a German in terms of a speaker of the German language, and the ideology which evolved from it dominated the founding of the German Empire in 1871 and continued to prevail at least until 1945. Although the political idea of the nation state and the notion of language as the marker of national identity were strongly advocated in Germany, they also took root in other societies, Italy among them.

Haarmann, at any rate, is entirely representative of all the scholars who have traversed this subject when he asserts that, following the establishment of the political ideology of the nation state, national identity in Western Europe has been based for more than one and fifty years on *Sprachnation*. 'This notion of national identity as exclusively related to the mother tongue has persisted in the European nation states as an elementary component of their inhabitants' way of thinking, and it has been transmitted – as a political idea with a still dominant range of influence – into the

[European Union] by its member states'. But what is interesting is that Haarmann then looks to the future and in doing so he firmly turns his back on *Sprachnation* as Europe's panacea. Firstly, he quotes (1991: 107) what Muljačić had written about him three years previously: 'Two centuries after the philosopher J.G. Herder who exalted the mother tongue as an essential component in the nature of every people, another German, Harald Haarmann, a scholar of Romance languages and cultures, rejects the notion of *Sprachnation* as a 19th century fabric and by doing so refutes the weighty heritage of the romanticist nationalism, linguistic and cultural'. And then Haarmann himself adds: 'What is needed for the interaction among the communities under the auspices of the European integration movement is indeed a new "anti-Herder" concept of identity. The crucial question remains as to whether the new identity has to be conceived as exclusively supranational, with the national element left behind'.

¹ Hulkó and Ibolya were interviewed for the 3 December 2008 edition of the DW-World programme "European Journal"

² Sme – Slovakia 22 October 2008

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/presseschau/archiv/aehnliche/archiv_article/ARTICLE38218-Controversy-over-school-textbook-in-Slovakia

³ Slovak Spectator 19 November 2008: 'An amendment to the education law, tailored by the ethnic Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK), currently before parliament, is unacceptable, said Fico, as it requires geographical names to be printed exclusively in the minority language.'

http://www.spectator.sk/articles/view/33631/10/fico_says_hungarian_textbooks_problem_will_be_resolved.html

⁴ Slovak Spectator 3 December 2008: 'Smer acted without the support of its two coalition partners, the Slovak National Party (SNS) and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS).' These two parties wanted textbooks for ethnic minorities to use exclusively Slovak geographical terms.

http://www.spectator.sk/articles/view/33772/10/place_names_in_textbooks_for_minorities_will_be_bilingual.html

⁵ Henri Astier 'War of words in Divided Belgium' [BBC News Europe] 8 October 2008. The sensitivity of the language is well illustrated in the same report with reference to an earlier incident in 2005 when the widow of the former Member of the European Parliament and Belgian Cabinet Minister, Fernand Harman, proposed the epitaph "L'Europe est ma patrie" for his gravestone. It was changed to the Latin "Europa patria mea" after she was warned by the funeral director that the Overijse authorities would not approve of the use of the French language on the gravestone. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/default.stm>

⁶ Emma Jane Kirby 'French row over English lessons' [BBC News Europe] 3 September 2008. Interestingly, at a seminar held at the University of Canterbury National Centre for Research on Europe on 28 September 2007, the writer of this thesis had asked the French Ambassador to New Zealand, His Excellency Mr Michel Legras, a question concerning the importance of the French language to his government. The Ambassador's reply was that employment was a more important matter than language.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/default.stm>

⁷ ‘Eurovision song sparks French row’ [BBC News Europe]: ‘Mr Myard told the BBC that allowing an English song to represent France was a fiasco: “The French language is the tool of a huge industry in terms of cultural influence and if we French give up our language, what do you think the others will say?”’ 16 April 2008

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/default.stm>

⁸ ‘Italian call to use less English’ [BBC News Europe]: ‘... now an influential cultural institute has asked Italians to protect the language and reject “Anglitaliano”.’ 10 September 2008

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/default.stm>

⁹ Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986) *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* London: James Currey page 4

¹⁰ David Crystal (2000) *Language Death* Cambridge University Press page 33

¹¹ Marshall McLuhan *The Medium is the Message* (1967) New York: Bantam Books. The extracts are from pages 16, 24 and 67 respectively.

¹² University of California Press

¹³ Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine (2000) *Vanishing Voices: the extinction of the world’s languages* Oxford University Press

¹⁴ *ibid* page ix

¹⁵ *ibid* page 145

¹⁶ *ibid* page 40

¹⁷ See, for example, Nettle and Romaine *op.cit.* page 174 and the section “The philosophical and historical literature on the language issue(s) in Europe” in this Chapter below.

¹⁸ The European Parliament ‘Note to the Reader’ accompanying the CD-ROMs

¹⁹ Details of the 1999 election results can be viewed at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/election/results/>

²⁰ The following abbreviations for Member States appear in this thesis:

BE = Belgium; DA = Denmark; DE = Germany; ES = Spain; FR = France; HE = Greece; IR = Ireland; IT = Italy; LU = Luxembourg; NL = Netherlands; OS = Austria; PT = Portugal; SU = Finland; SV = Sweden; UK = United Kingdom

²¹ Judge and Earnshaw (2003) *The European Parliament* Palgrave Macmillan page 70

²² Judge and Earnshaw write (*op.cit.* page 71) that the perspective of ‘second-order’ national elections was first used in the analysis of European Parliament elections by Reif, K and Schmitt, H (1980) ‘Nine Second-Order Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results’, *European Journal of Political Research*, 8, 3-44. Simon Hix (1999) *The Political System of the European Union*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan at page 180 puts it this way: ‘As Reif and Schmitt (1980) first pointed out, European elections are in fact about national political issues, national political parties, and the fight for national government office... the main goal of political parties in the [European Union] is to win national government office, and elections that decide who holds national executive office are consequently ‘first order’ contests. Political parties cannot resist the opportunity to use all other elections – such as European elections, regional and local elections, second-chamber elections or elections to choose a ceremonial head of state – as ‘beauty contests’ on the performance of the party/ies that won the last ‘first-order’ election. These other contests are hence ‘second-order’.’ The same perspective is discussed in Smith, J (1999) *Europe’s Elected Parliament*, Sheffield, UACES/Sheffield Academic Press.

²³ The following abbreviations for languages appear in Column Five of Appendix One of this thesis:

DA = Danish; DE = German; EL = Greek; EN = English; ES = Spanish; FI = Finnish; FR = French; IR = Irish; IT = Italian; NL = Dutch; PT = Portuguese; SV = Swedish

²⁴ The European Year of Languages 2001 (EYL 2001) was agreed on the 17 July 2000 by the European Parliament and the European Council (Decision No 1934/2000/EC). The wider aim of the Year was to encourage lifelong language learning by *all persons* residing in the participating countries through stressing the cultural, educational, economic and personal

benefits of studying European languages. Target languages were the official languages of the Community together with Irish, Letzeburgesch, and *other languages*.

The specific objectives of the Year were:

[1] to raise awareness on the richness of linguistic and cultural diversity within the European Union and of its value in terms of civilisation and culture.

[2] to encourage multilingualism;

[3] to bring to the notice of the widest possible audience the advantages of competencies in several languages;

[4] to encourage lifelong learning of languages, starting if possible at nursery and primary level, and the acquisition of related skills;

[5] to collect and disseminate information about the teaching and learning of languages.

Source: *Evaluation of the European Year of Languages 2001 – Executive Summary– August 2002*

http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/doc619_en.pdf

CHAPTER TWO: LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY – THE CURRENT ACADEMIC DEBATE

Rhetoric and Themes

There is certainly an abundance of rhetoric in the academic literature on the subject of linguistic diversity in the European Union. Terms like ‘community of communication’, ‘identity’, ‘language ecology’, ‘linguistic imperialism’, ‘homogenisation’, ‘hegemony’, *Philosophen*, ‘global English’, ‘subsidiarity’ and ‘democratic deficit’ abound in the published works. The road to the future is certainly paved with good intentions as is well illustrated by the *Action Plan 2004-2006*. But will *action or inaction* be forthcoming? The forces unleashed against linguistic diversity in Europe have been gaining momentum for decades, and while they do not amount to a tidal wave, and certainly not to a tsunami, they are proving irresistible especially to the young citizens of Europe. Will “identity” in the Herderian sense not mean anything to these young citizens until they are much older by which time it might well be, to change the metaphor, too late to turn the clock back? Will English, in fact, prove to be what some people are claiming it is already, the “killer” language?

But what were the commonly expressed ideas in the academic literature regarding linguistic diversity in the European Union current at about the same time as the Members of the European Parliament participated in debates on the issue of linguistic diversity between 2000 and 2003?

Do major themes emerge from a reading of a considerable number of published academic works and do these themes have any relevance to the whole discussion in the European Parliament on issues of linguistic diversity?

There are **three major themes** to emerge from the academic literature:

- Support for or opposition to a *lingua franca*
- Support for language ecology policies
- *Laisser faire*

Each of these themes is considered in turn.

There are present in the academic literature two strands. One strand is a critique of language policy and practice in the European Union. The other is a post-colonialism, anti-neo-imperialism and anti-globalisation strand. There are extremist ideologies at play in the latter and only Pennycook (*Pennycook* 2003) offers a moderate view. The clash between English on the one hand and other European languages such as French, German, Italian and Spanish is not exactly parallel to the clash between English/French/Spanish and languages in Africa or Latin America. French, German, Italian and Spanish, to name just four European languages, come with extensive literatures and a very long written history and are used for all the major functions of a given society: education (to tertiary level), radio and television (and the internet), and newspapers. The concept of language spaces is important, with different languages being used for different functions. There is a difference between the running of the European Commission and the European Parliament, using special discourse practices and a kind of technical Euro-English, and all other spheres of life in the European Union. Neo-imperialism imagery may not be appropriate given that all the Member States of the European Union joined voluntarily and the accession process took place over an extended period as well as the fact that some European states (such as Norway and Switzerland) have decided not to become members.

Support for or opposition to a *lingua franca*

The first of these themes might be termed the support for a *lingua franca* – that is, one language which would be used as a medium of communication among the citizens of the different Member States and within the institutions of the European Union. The adoption of a *lingua franca* might eventually achieve easier communication within the European Union but a consequence might also be linguistic uniformity as the use of other languages for communication is discouraged.

One of the major questions facing the European Union at the start of the new millennium was effectively how to get people understanding one another when they spoke different languages. Did the existence and use of so many languages within the European Union slow down European integration? There is a view that the problem to be confronted is how to enable the peoples of Europe, with their different languages, histories and traditions, to understand one another better on a continuing basis and how one could then continue to help the peoples of Europe to understand one another in the future by ensuring a common approach to language learning. (Ager 2001: 66) Supporters of the adoption of a *lingua franca* have argued that a common language is an essential pre-requisite to an integrated Europe, particularly if the European Union long-term is to become, in effect, a new nation state. English is the only obvious candidate for a *lingua franca*, but governments that are concerned about their domestic popularity may well be unwilling to officially recognise this fact of life.

Proponents of a *lingua franca* acknowledge that unless Europeans accept a common language one will have to be imposed upon them in the name of rationalisation. There is already a process of language rationalisation under way with a *de facto* shift to a reduced number of languages. There will inevitably be some kinds of restriction on people's freedom to use the language of their choice because the market forces of demand and supply will apply not only to what we have regarded as traditional examples of goods and services but also, increasingly, to languages. It has been suggested that consistent with the workings of the market some kinds of restrictions

on people's freedom to use the language of their choice will be inevitable. (Roche 1991: 143) This theme of rationalisation was alluded to in the conclusion to *Euromosaic*, a report commissioned by the European Commission itself into the production and re-production of the minority language groups of the European Union. *Euromosaic* accepted that the prestige of a language is determined by its value for social mobility and that if people see there is an obvious advantage in having access to a particular language then this will impact favourably on their attitude to that particular language. The *Euromosaic* report concluded that while the effort to have people learning several languages to increase their geographical mobility will continue, the reality is that just a few languages will increasingly serve as the *linguae francae* of Europe, and that certainly not all social classes are, therefore, going to be geographically mobile. (*Euromosaic* 1996: 58)

There has been support among some academic writers for the view that English will become the only working language of the European Union institutions. At least one has claimed, for example, that proposals have been made to select English specifically for this purpose and that English will, in the long term, be the sole official language for all international communication in Europe, acknowledging that some go even further and think it will replace all the national languages. (*van Els* 2001: 341) Such a claim will likely come with a recommendation that in the meantime there be a reduction in the variety of languages used orally within the Union and that the number of written languages used within its institutions be kept to a small number.

There are, however, other academic commentators who are prepared to go much further than this with the very bold assertion that linguistic diversity has actually become an obstacle to European identity. Their contention is that linguistic diversity is proving to be one of the most important obstacles to building a stronger sense of European citizenship and is contributing to the growth of the much-discussed 'democratic deficit' within the European Union. (*Patten and Kymlicka* 2003: 9) So where does this thread of argument logically end? It surely ends in the suggestion (*Gubbins* 1996: 48) that the time may have arrived for the European Union to abandon its stated objective of linguistic equality, and honestly and openly embrace English as an institutional *lingua franca*.

The view is expressed in the academic literature that English will likely be embraced as a *lingua franca* because it is a useful language and provides access not only to knowledge but also to markets. Significantly, for these proponents, the English language is losing its sole association with the countries where it is the national language and so it can become the medium of European trans-nationality and belong to all those who use it in this way. This resulting variety of English which is not the same language as the English of literature but is intended to serve a role in communication and in the economy has been variously referred to as an ‘English based Lingua Franca’ (Tabouret-Keller 1991: 54), ‘World English’ (Fettes 2003: 39), and ‘Euro-English’ (Braselmann 2004: 100).

The question, then, is how to make the spread of this English more acceptable to citizens across Europe, because according to such a view the message in a democratic European Union is more important than the medium of the message. This view is that there might well be no message communicated at all unless there is a *lingua franca* in use because strict language equality cannot deliver the medium of communication required by the projected rate of growth of the Union’s institutions. (Wright 2004: 13) Membership of the European Union has grown rapidly with the majority of new members increasingly coming from the east of Europe. In addition, within many of the Member States large scale migration has occurred and there is a claim that intergenerational “minorisation” will hasten the advance of a *lingua franca*. The argument here is that you can accept English as a *lingua franca* and still promote the teaching and learning of a wider range of languages. (Extra and Yağmur 2004: 402)

What are the effects going to be of accepting English as a *lingua franca*? At least one writer foresaw an individual’s regional language, if one existed, being used at home while the *lingua franca* would essentially be used at work. (Carmichael 2000b: 287) The question that then must be asked is what need there would be in such a situation for a national language. One suggestion has been to urge the learning of English for communication with the wider world plus a regional minority language which would give access to roots and identity because together they could serve all the communication needs of the individual. (Wright 2000: 191) The new “international English variety” language to emerge would develop a life of its own and everyone

would effectively become minorities meaning no one would be a minority! (Wright 2004: 239) The result would be a more democratic Europe. Everyone would become bilingual. Another important, and unexpected, advantage of the adoption of a *lingua franca* is that there would thus be greater equality among the speakers of the official state languages and those of the languages that declined during the nineteenth century era of nation-state building. If every citizen belonged to a minority within the European Union then the very idea of a linguistic minority would become redundant.

Writing more than fifteen years ago, one academic author contemplated the time when English was firmly established as the language of wider communication, a time when the speakers of minority languages would ultimately give up their mother tongue. (Haarmann 1991: 112) This author warned against the dangers of linguistic chauvinism which has its origins in traditional nationalism.

Yet fears have been expressed that imprecise and “pidgin” English would inevitably lead to communication difficulties and breakdowns. More than one academic writer has advocated Esperanto as the alternative to English (Fettes 2003, Gubbins 1996, Tonkin 2003) by reason of its common-sense, democratic and equitable qualities as the preferred *lingua franca*. Of course, there have been yet other alternatives put forward, including Latin for administration and legal texts and “Europanto” (Muller 2002: 52) yet the reality is that English is currently the only language likely to fulfil the role of *lingua franca* despite the widely recognised attendant economic and social costs.

The omnipresence of English language use in the European Union may well be blamed on commerce and business yet it is considered likely that it will be the developments in the technology of information gathering and processing in this decade which will bring the issue to a head. We are told that the computer-based information and communication technology era in which we are currently living is the third revolution in human communication following the invention of writing and the invention of mechanised printing. It has been contended that simple economic and technological realities seem to require the cultivation of a global *lingua franca* and that English is at present the sole major contender to play that role (Tonkin 2003: 326,

330). The argument advanced as the most important factor is that the participants in the technological revolution (that is, the people) are put in a position where they are able to control the outcomes of the revolution. The sheer cost of this new computer-based technology is such that the research and development undertaken to make it happen is generally carried out by trans-national consortia. The exchange and processing of information on the networks is going to depend on the language skills of the people who encode and decode the information and, therefore, so the argument goes (*Wright* 2000a), the exchange and processing has to occur in a language which the teams of workers have knowledge of.

But is this increasingly powerful position for English relative to other languages a march of ‘conquest’ as we might be led to believe? (*Nunberg* 2004: 231) It has been suggested that the easiest way to bring the benefits of the new technologies to the greatest number of people in the shortest time frame is to require people to use a single language. (*Laver and Roukens* 1996: 2) Such a viewpoint is tempered with the acknowledgement that such a policy would not only exclude European citizens without knowledge of that language from the use of the information and communication technology systems, but the majority of European languages risk being excluded also. It is also acknowledged that if the ranges of uses a language is put to are decreased in number, the viability of a language is threatened and accordingly the health of the culture associated with the language is imperilled.

According to some analysts, English as the symbol of the consumer society and personal prosperity has been further elevated to become the symbol of political rights and personal freedom. (*Tonkin* 2003) Is English, in effect, the language of democracy? And, if so, should it be the language of international human rights? There is strong disagreement among writers here. On one side, there is a view that in the democratic process, language is power and that democracy functions best within a “community of communication”. (*Wright* 2000a: 155; 2004: 239) According to this argument, equality and liberty have always proved difficult to reconcile in democratic theory and practice and nowhere is this more evident than in the question of language. Equality is served, so the argument goes, by eradicating linguistic difference and building a community of communication that allows all to participate in the

democratic life of the state. English is seen as the only viable option for such a *lingua franca* in a democratic European Union.

The opposing argument points to real dangers ahead if one were to accept that democracy needs a shared language and that the guiding instruments and statutes underlying acceptable standards of human and political conduct are set out in one particular language, that is English, at the expense of others because by doing so justice will be evaluated in the legal terms made available by that particular language. (Toolan 2000: 63, 61) There is just as much evidence, so this particular argument goes, that English is an instrument in the anti-democratisation that characterises much current globalisation. It is claimed that politics are the most democratic when it is politics in the vernacular (Patten and Kymlicka 2003: 10), conducted in the language of the people.

Another significant threat to linguistic diversity in the European Union is the decline which has been taking place over recent decades in the use of languages other than English in the field of science. The published academic writers referred to below seem to accept that English is now the international language of science and the fear expressed by these writers is that scientific treatises are not going to be made available to the general population in other languages unless high quality accurate translation systems exist. But there are other serious repercussions of the universality of English in the domain of science. How will other languages develop the vocabulary to keep pace with the developments in physical and biological sciences? Will these other languages have the linguistic resources required to engage in research? Will research and scientific creativity throughout the world suffer as a result?

Typical of this point of view is the belief that other languages will become unfit for rendering scientific thought and, therefore, unfit for innovation. (Thielmann 2002: 104) The case is made for maintaining and expanding linguistic diversity in the sciences because it increases perspectives and opportunities for scientific intuition and, therefore, innovation. Linguistic diversity ought not to be regarded as a threat to the maximum efficiency of the flow of information. Endorsement of a scientific monoculture is tantamount to a renunciation of one of the greatest assets science as a global enterprise possesses: the diversity of ideas, concepts and ways of thought

preserved in different scientific languages and cultures. Are we already at the stage where scientific theories expressed in local, regional or national languages face difficulties of being perceived and integrated into international scientific discourse? (*Hüppauf* 2004: 13). The emergence of a scientific linguistic monoculture is also seen (*Liddicoat and Muller* 2002: 6) as leading not just to the loss of a linguistic register but, more significantly, to the loss of the culturally based conceptual systems. (See also *McConnell* 2003: 309) Representative of the academic literature on this topic is the thesis (*Ehlich* 2004: 182) that European science is now complementary to English language scientific needs and that unless the European science languages are strengthened the net result will be a loss of knowledge, the very opposite of what is envisaged in globalisation.

Opinion is certainly divided in the academic literature as to whether the enormous growth of international English is the result of an international conspiracy to impose the language. There is debate among academic writers as to the real nature of the English language whose use is spreading throughout the European Union. Is it the English of the United Kingdom and/or, even more concerning, the language of the United States? Is there more than one English language – in fact, many?

One viewpoint is that English has diversified into several varieties so that English is no longer the “property” of the United Kingdom or the United States, but is now a stateless language, belonging to its European and overseas users, and, therefore, there are no longer grounds for simply equating the English language with British or American cultural imperialism. (*Muller* 2002: 46) Such a viewpoint affirms that the language, which Great Britain had established overseas in the days of Empire, has now become truly international in terms of accepted local varieties, and a language which was once ‘tainted’ by imperialism is rapidly becoming ‘ours’ in many parts of the world (*Edwards* 1994: 105). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the ‘Euro-English’ referred to earlier (Refer to page 36 above) (*Braselmann* 2004: 100) is not merely not the English of the British or of the Americans, but is an international English which is often only mastered by native speakers of English if they have had the experience of learning other languages. In fact, while England might be the home of a global language increasingly used by citizens elsewhere and everywhere, Britain and its institutions have no longer any customary authority over the English language.

(Toolan 2003: 62)

The growth of international English has been viewed (*Ager* 2001: 19) not as the result of an international conspiracy to impose the language, but the result of historical (the spread of the British Empire), commercial (economic dominance by Great Britain then by the United States), political and military factors. According to this view, the users of international English are not seeking to become more like the British or the Americans. Indeed, the reality is that the increasing use of the language is accompanied by a rejection of the cultural norms of the main English-speaking nations. It is contended that while English tends to influence other languages, it does not generally replace them in all spheres of life and (*Barbour* 2002: 13) while it is true that internationalists may switch to an international language for aspects of work, they show little sign of doing so for leisure activities and in the family. For all these writers on this side of the argument, and it is not just limited to a handful, globalisation is able to co-exist with linguistic and cultural pluralism.

The benign view of the associations of English is rejected by quite a number of academic authors who do not consider that English is a neutral language. At the moderate end of the spectrum of contrary opinion it has been argued that the historical association of English with a single member of the Union (namely, the United Kingdom) and with the country perceived as the main challenge to restoring European hegemony (namely, the United States of America) means that non-pragmatic arguments continue to hold sway. (*Spolsky* 2004: 54) There is a conviction that strong economic and cultural factors are at present acting to promote the use of English in numerous fields in Europe (*Truchot* 2003: 108). Justification for this conviction is provided by quotations (*Seidlhofer and Jenkins* 2003: 140) from a number of publications emanating from the United Kingdom including a 1998 British Council document. This particular 1998 document quoted hailed the ‘incredible success’ of the English language as Great Britain’s greatest asset because the English language ‘enhances Britain’s image’ as a modern, dynamic country and brings widespread political, economic and cultural advantages both to Great Britain and to its partners! However, it would be wise to interpret such statements in context. The British Council is charged with promoting the language and culture of Great Britain. When its budget is under threat, it makes grandiose statements.

The conspiratorial theorists freely use the term ‘hegemony’. It is an interesting term to be used in such a context. While it is derived from the Greek *hegeisthai* meaning ‘to lead’ and while the term would have referred in ancient Greece either to a group which was at one time dominant, such as Sparta, or to an individual who in any period exercised a similar degree of power, like Philip II of Macedon, the word came to have a different and much more sinister meaning in the twentieth century, especially during the Cold War. At the time of the Cold War, the reference was to a dictatorship which led to a whole region being subordinated to the power of a dominant class, usually accompanied by massive armed force or the threat of force, and the imposition of a set of values which belonged to that dominant class to the exclusion of any differing set of values. In this context, Russia’s grasp over the states of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its neighbouring satellite states in Europe or China’s control over the surrounding territories in Asia were regarded as classic examples of hegemony. Inherent in the meaning ascribed to the word was the view that the ambition of this dominant class or hegemons was to ultimately gain control of the whole world and effectively enslave them to a political and economic ideology.

This is the association these academic authors ascribe to ‘hegemony’ in their writing on the role English is playing in the threat to linguistic diversity and not the association the word has in current social and political theory which is derived from the Italian writer Antonio Gramsci. He differentiated coercion by one social class in the form of state political and economic control from hegemony which was derived from the consensus achieved by that dominant class through intellectual and moral leadership. For Gramsci the consent of the other classes was given actively and willingly – not superimposed. With Gramsci, the part played by intellectuals was most important because to achieve and maintain hegemony was a matter of education or, as was expressed in *Quaderni del Carcere*, every relationship of hegemony is necessarily a pedagogic relationship. A hegemony to be successful had to be based on a set of attitudes which were universal and appealed to the general aspirations of the population as a whole. (Joll 1977, Ransome 1992)

It is alleged (Macedo, Dendrinis and Gounari 2003: 45) that the European Union makes a claim to respect the linguistic and cultural diversity of its members yet at the same time propagates linguistic and cultural uniformity and that English as ruler and

the other 'strong' languages sustain domination over the 'weak' ones. Linguistic hegemony in Europe has been aided in the past, it is further alleged, by language education planning and is being assisted at present by curricular practices in European schools. Linguistic hegemony is seen as both originating and resulting in the unequal distribution of wealth and of cultural and political power. Linguistic hegemony poses a threat to the unity of Europe. There is no doubt at all that English, according to this argument, is on its way to becoming Europe's *lingua franca* and the sole language for international relations, intellectual production, mass communication, and technology. While this monolingualism might in some quarters be viewed as an easy solution to what is construed as a communication problem, there will be long term adverse social impacts on the linguistic and cultural rights of Member States.

The proposition put forward (2003: 13) is that the present attempt to champion English in world affairs cannot be reduced simply to issues of language, but rests on a full comprehension of the ideological elements that generate and sustain linguistic, cultural, and racial discrimination. These elements are said to represent vestiges of a colonial legacy in the so-called democracies of the world. Moreover, (2003: 16) learning a dominant language which English in fact imposes upon the subordinate speakers a feeling of subordination, as their life experience, history, and language are ignored, if not sacrificed. It is claimed that it is consequently safe to argue that English today represents the ideal tool for cultural invasion, with its monopoly of the internet, monopoly of international commerce, its role in the dissemination of celluloid culture, and its role in the so-called 'Disneyfication' of world cultures.

Incidentally, these academic authors detect a certain irony in what is happening. A number of the European Union Member States that are today resisting what is perceived as the growing hegemony of English were themselves, in previous centuries, colonising powers in Africa, Asia and the Americas and in the process suppressed local indigenous languages. What is happening in this regard today is viewed (Hüppauf 2004: 4) as wounding to the self-esteem of some European nations. This is so because their experience as colonisers in the past means they are more aware than most that the intentional spread of a political system, combined with cultural values and a life style, from one centre of power will inevitably create victims who are pushed to the margins, reducing their self-worth. Therefore, it is that once

powerful nations of Europe feel they are being pushed to the periphery of world affairs by English and Anglo-American culture for which language is the main vehicle.

There is an academic opinion that the domination of English now amounts to 'hegemony' but should be seen in terms of hegemony by the United States. In this argument 'the European Union as an economic competitor provides a brake on globalisation in terms of United States hegemony'. (*Wright 2000a: 232*) Market forces have brought about what is referred to as creeping anglicisation and americanisation. While the European Union brings together numerous groups for transnational, inter-cultural cooperation in increasing political integration, in the single market, in the technological transfers, in the defence structures and in the educational exchanges, nevertheless there has been little thought given to safeguarding the linguistic diversity which is its official policy, and English is frequently used as the *lingua franca* which permits contact.

The linguistic effect of globalisation has been a vast increase in the use of English on one hand to transmit the political, economic and cultural philosophies of globalisation from the largely English speaking free market economies to the rest of the world, and on the other hand as a *lingua franca* which actually allows globalisation to be realised on a daily basis. Consequently, the very integrity of a nation state is threatened in the process, it is claimed. It has been asserted (*Phillipson 2003a: 4*) that globalisation and americanisation are inseparable and together they may be moving language policy in the direction of monolingualism. English is seen as a kind of linguistic cuckoo, taking over where other breeds of language have historically nested and acquired territorial rights, and obliging non-native speakers of English to acquire the behavioural habits and linguistic forms of English.

This is a theme that has been forcefully taken up. While there might be many possible ways of viewing the global nature of English, it has been argued (*Alexander 2003: 88*) that any which ignore the current neo-liberal, corporatised Anglo-American politico-economic set up are unlikely to gain much credence. The claim is made that under the guise of English as an auxiliary international language to ease commerce, trade and even academic and educational mobility, millions of individuals are being channelled

into the process of 'englishization'. Alexander will not buy into the argument that the dominance of English merely reflects unequal power resulting from differences in social, economic, political or scientific conditions. Such reasoning, it is maintained, while it may well appeal to naïve people, ignores the obvious facts, not just from the research of linguists, but from a whole range of social-scientific evidence. This evidence is said to show that English is not a solution to the unravelling of the 'unequal power' relations in the world but an integral part of the problem. Moreover, any discussion of English as the global language and its implications that ignores this will be running round and round in circles.

In fact, the claim is made that this is precisely what the proponents of the Washington consensus and the new framework of world order wish to happen. And the argument is even extended to the point that the institutional consequences of 'englishization' include threats not just to linguistic diversity but even to biodiversity. All this is concealed with the help of a great deal of money spent by corporations to spread the view that English is the best of all possible worlds while academic scholarship is 'seduced' to acclaim the self-evident necessity of English or its 'naïve redefinition as just a lingua franca'. Incidentally, this is very similar to the academic position (Macedo, Dendrinos and Gounari 2003: 16) that the promotion of language policies that package English as a "super" language, which is not only harmless but also should be acquired by all societies that aspire to competitiveness in the globalised world economic order, results in many countries eagerly promoting an English education campaign where those citizens who opt not to learn English become responsible for their own lack of advancement. These two positions maintain that the correlation of 'englishization' with real world socioeconomic processes, including global inequality, is undeniable. The end goal is the accumulation of wealth at the 'centre' at the expense of the 'periphery'. There are echoes of *Euromosaic* in this.

This perceived threat to biodiversity itself has been endorsed by one of the foremost academics in the advocacy of language survival. Her argument (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000: 267, 655) is that whereas the English language is presented as a panacea, on a par with the market economy and democracy, in reality there are stark adverse effects. The 'modernisation' and 'globalisation' processes have caused unprecedented stress on both nature and on people, on our languages and cultures. The result has been an

accelerated environmental degradation (= nature under stress), and growing gaps between the haves and the never to haves, and in linguistic and cultural genocide (= people under stress). The critical decision to be made by the human race, according to this author, is whether the choices we make are through markets and monocultural efficiency, or through diversity.

The term linguicism appears in the literature. Linguicism involves a dominant group and language presenting an idealised self-image, stigmatising the dominated group and language. Some authors (*Macedo, Dendrinos and Gounari* 2003: 90, 91) concede that the term linguicism is extremely useful when analysing hegemonic operations in foreign language education planning, but believe that linguoracism is a more accurate term to describe what is actually occurring. Their case is that when the Centre, serving its socio-political and economic interests, constructs the superiority of its languages and language teaching practices as natural, there are processes at work which repress opposition and resistance by subordinating the Periphery. These processes contribute to the unequal distribution of linguistic and cultural power. These practices are in line with other forms and expressions of cultural racism, and hence the use of the term linguoracism which more accurately, in their view, conveys what is described as the insidious racism involved in all forms of linguistic imperialism.

Yet another term that appears is linguicide. This word has been used (*Phillipson* 2003a: 145) to describe the killing of a language, a death which less powerful languages might suffer from economic or 'market' forces just as much as from state-imposed policies. Whatever the catalyst might be, linguistic human rights are violated when members of a minority group are not able to use their language so that they can reproduce themselves as a distinct cultural or ethnic group. Linguistic capital is seen as a significant form of cultural capital and that some forms of linguistic capital are more easily convertible into material resources and influence than others. The assertion is made that when injustice and economic inequality correspond with distinct linguistic groups political crises are inevitable.

Such an argument does not find universal favour, of course. Rebuttal has come (*Pennycook* (2003: 7) with a concession that while Phillipson adds a critical and political framework within which we can understand the global spread of English in

relationship to global forms of inequality, it is also important to understand what Phillipson's theory can and cannot do. According to Pennycook, the issue for Phillipson is 'structural power' rather than local effects and he is interested in 'English linguistic hegemony' which contributes to the maintenance of English as a dominant language. Pennycook believes that what this theory lacks is a view of how English is taken up, how people use English, and why people choose to use English and that what Phillipson does not show is the effects of that spread in terms of what people do with English.

Fears have been expressed (*Edwards* 1994: 3) that serious long term damage will be done to indigenous languages which do not have the resilience to coexist with what is referred to as the greater language-killing potential of the present world language, and in these situations English will not simply be a lingua franca but will be a replacement language. English might become more than just the most frequent language of communication and a warning has been given (*Posner* 1991: 130) that it may increasingly take over the roles of mother tongue and vernacular language. This would deprive Europe of all the advantages that its multilingualism and the corresponding cultural diversity have afforded it over many centuries.

Most academic writers seem to agree that English is *de facto* now the *lingua franca* in the European Union. Some see the effects as good *and* bad. English is regarded (*Photis and Yvonne Lysandrou* 2003: 97) as being positive when it promotes development but negative when it results in dispossession. According to this view a conjunction of these two roles means that English helps to reinforce a condition of "progression", or dynamic stasis, resulting from the simultaneous but antithetical processes of progression and regression. Their verdict is that there is a general consensus that the current rush on the part of communities the world over to embrace the English language is bound up with the pressures of globalisation. Nevertheless, there is within this accepted framework disagreement as to whether technical considerations (that is, English being a neutral language of communication) or issues of power (that is, English as a non-neutral language of domination) play the more significant part in language spread.

This theme has, in fact, embodied two sub-themes. The first is acceptance that English is now what has been described (*Hoberg* 2004: 92) as the dominant language of the whole world including Europe, indeed the first world language in the history of humankind. The second sub-theme is that the dominance of English has resulted in fear - fear of what is termed (*Hüppauf* 2004: 4) monolingualism emerging in the institutions of the European Union as well in general communication to such an extent that all languages other than English will be reduced to insignificance.

The great question confronting the European Union is whether languages are to be accepted as being much more than just tools for communication. Von Humboldt demonstrated, it has been written (*Thierse* 2004: 194), that our thinking and understanding of the world are always mediated by language and that each individual language opens up its own, unique perception of the world. Thierse's own words sum up the dilemma which would face the European Union if a *lingua franca* were to be whole-heartedly embraced without protection for other languages being put in place: 'Each foreign language allows us to gain a certain degree of insight into a new view of things, particularly the everyday life of a people, can break down divisions and adversarial thinking, and promote understanding and tolerance. Only a knowledge of other peoples' languages gives us comprehensive access to their cultures, allowing us to become aware not just of how they differ from us, but also of what we have in common. This broadening of perspectives will be of great significance for the further progress of European unification, as well as for the development and deepening of a European consciousness'.

Support for language ecology policies

A **second** major theme to emerge from the literature involves advocating the implementation of programmes designed to promote the widespread use of national state languages and autochthonous regional languages as opposed to the fatalistic acceptance of English as the *lingua franca* within the European Union. These programmes are often referred to in published works as **language ecology policies**. This theme is about increased affirmative action policies being actioned, including

positive discrimination strategies, to allow and encourage the widespread use of national state languages and autochthonous regional languages within the European community and, particularly, within its institutions. These interventionist language ecology programmes will result, so the literature suggests, in a renaissance of linguistic diversity. Language ecology is all about not imposing one particular language on people but achieving the best balance possible by allowing different languages to flourish within political and economic entities. Those advocating this view have argued that as membership of the European Union expands, linguistic diversity (and other cultural issues) will become more and more important and that “heterogeneous” is more desirable than “homogeneous” and “difference” is more acceptable than “assimilation”.

Euromosaic condemned ‘economist discourse’ which, when put into practice, allowed wealth to be accumulated at the Centre at the expense of the Periphery with consequently detrimental effects on linguistic diversity. The report (1996: 44) was critical of economic theory that would have the cultural features (including language) of the Periphery eliminated in order to promote so-called rationalist economic orientations on behalf of the very same Periphery. A core of this economic theory is to break down the isolation of the Periphery by facilitating communication and the report is in no doubt that this theory has constituted most of the thinking about minority language groups during the past two centuries and has directly led to a reduction of diversity in Europe.

Language ecology has been described (*Fettes* 2003: 44) as all about not imposing one particular language on people but achieving the best balance possible by allowing different languages to flourish within political and economic entities. A variant of this view (*Edwards* 1994: 116) is that loyalty to a language is very often, but by no means always, tied up to the economic value of that language. Language ecology, of course, does not mean that an individual citizen *must* learn and speak two or more languages for the ecology to be effective. It means that languages exist side by side, and may even have equal status and equal rights, as in Belgium.

Who would implement such a language ecology policy? It is assumed (*Tonkin* 2003:

326) that linguistic diversity will wither unless it is planned for and that the European Union cannot keep ignoring this issue because it will simply not go away. The *Euromosaic* Report (1996: 44) was in no doubt that bearing in mind the forcefulness of the concept of freedom and liberty in the contemporary discourse on democracy, the cooperation and commitment of the state was essential in any implementation of language ecology.

Writers have pointed to the practice in Belgium (*Nelde* 1995: 77) as evidence that the relative size of an ethno-linguistic group need no longer be the sole determining factor in language planning and that the protection of a language community could proceed from the assumption that a numerical minority are likely to need more help than the numerical majority. The argument maintained is that if status is refused to an autochthonous language on the grounds that only a small proportion of the population speak it, there will be a much greater cost, economically and politically, in the long term, and government should be prepared to spend money now in order not to pay that greater cost some time in the future. The desire to avoid what is called 'potential sources of conflict' runs like a leitmotif through much of the language ecology advocacy published on the question of language use within the European Union.

Reference has already been made (Refer to pages 25 - 29 above) to the notion of national identity within Europe having been based on *Sprachnation* and the role of the *Philosophen* in propagating the notion that national identity is exclusively related to the mother tongue.

There has been a call for action (*Laver and Roukens* 1996: 2) from the European Union, urgent action to protect the 'linguistic diversity and cultural health' of the European communities. And that action (*Quell* 1998: 308) needs to take the form of a structure for language and for linguistic plurality because it is unlikely that such a structure will ever come about through the free market model. The hope is expressed that linguistic challenges will be faced in an open manner and will result in solutions for an equitable and efficient multilingual future. Even a writer like van Els (Refer to page 35 above) who has argued that English will, in the long term, be the sole official language for all international communication in Europe seems ambivalent because he

makes something of a case for language ecology programmes (*van Els* 2001: 349), recognising the subjective value that people attach to their own language and culture. Yet there comes with the support a caveat that the weight of these interests should be offset against the disadvantages that may also be inherent in this diversity of languages and cultures such as in the situation where an efficient design of institutional language use is required.

One Greek academic, for example, is anything but optimistic about the future of the Greek language (*Pavlidou* 1991: 286), lamenting that, sooner or later, on the basis of economic or other practical factors, her mother tongue is doomed to death. For this particular author, linguistic nationalism, or even chauvinism, may be the only way to secure the survival of a language within the European Union and the only hope for a linguistically balanced Europe.

What consideration should be given to the economic cost of implementing a language ecology policy is debated in the literature. One academic author (*Pool* 1996: 161) has neatly summed up the dilemma facing those who advocate strongly for linguistic diversity but are conscious of the dangers of “throwing money” at the problem by concluding that the answer that seems politically best seems economically worst, while the answer that seems economically best seems politically worst.

The argument advanced here is that the European Union makes decisions that individuals are required to comply with, as if made by their own national states. Therefore, if the European Union wants its decisions to be considered legitimate and to be obeyed, its personnel must resemble (linguistically, as in other ways) the citizens that they regulate, and so the European Union ought to communicate its decisions to citizens in their own languages. Effectively this argument is that only with linguistic diversity will the supranational authorities achieve government with consent, otherwise the Latin American aphorism ‘*obedezco pero no cumplo*’ (‘I will obey but I will not comply’) may well apply. Talk of cost benefit analyses has become fashionable in all spheres in recent decades but a warning has been given (*Grin* 2003: 39) that policies designed to impose linguistic homogeneity or ‘zero diversity’ are ill-

advised because they underestimate the benefits and overestimate the costs of diversity.

The proponents of language ecology all emphasise the long-term adverse consequences of a failure to recognise national and non-national languages. All proponents point to armed conflict as the end result of such a failure. For example, it has been maintained (*Carmichael* 2000b: 288) that effective democracy demands recognition of the rights of smaller cultures and non-national languages before antagonistic situations develop into war. Another refers to the problems which, even today, continue to confront the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and appears to accept the view (*Muller* 2002: 52) that singling out any national language would put all other language speakers at a disadvantage, rendering it unlikely to bring the European project close to its citizens. There is a call (*Macedo, Dendrinos and Gounari* 20003: 58) for the creation of conditions that lead to the development of respect towards each society's linguistic and cultural wealth and thereby avoid conflict that would ultimately endanger the unity of the European Union.

The theme of "saving us from ourselves" runs like a refrain through the published works of those who support language ecology. The message of having as many and as diverse languages and cultures as possible is made abundantly clear (*Skutnabb-Kangas* 2003: 40) in terms of new ways of coping that we are going to need. Written in reference to the recent significant enlargement of the European Union – namely the addition of ten new members in 2004 – the importance of linguistic diversity was emphasised (*Extra and Yağmur* 2004: 404) because of the need for citizens of the enlarged Union to have the skills to communicate with one another effectively and to understand one another better. Learning and speaking other languages, it is said, encourage us to become more open to others, their cultures and their outlooks. Language diversity is considered a prerequisite rather than an obstacle for a community in which all citizens are equal, though not the same, and enjoy equal rights. (2004: 402)

Yet there has been detected (*O'Reilly* 2001: 8, 13) no shortage of ethnic revivalist claims to linguistic and cultural rights and access to power within existing States

because the ideal of a nation state is still very much alive even in this century in the minds of ethnic communities. In fact, the assertion is even made that there has been a strong trend towards respect for and revitalization of regional identities and minority languages and cultures, evidence for which can be seen in the increasing importance of regions in the economic, political and cultural evolution of the European Union. In this century, it is claimed, pluralism and multiculturalism have become a point of powerful political and philosophical discussion. In many respects these views echo those of another academic author (*Carmichael* 2000b: 284) who has detected within Europe an incredible tenacity displayed by certain cultures combined with a simple refusal to homogenise and, in these circumstances, language has a crucial role to play.

Laissez faire

The **third** major theme to emerge from the literature on linguistic diversity in the European Union is probably best referred to as the *laissez faire* approach. In other words, the status quo is to be retained and all the languages must fend for themselves.

The term ‘laxism’ has been used to describe this approach to the problem. According to this point of view, decisions would not be made at the supranational level of the European Union to determine which language or languages must be used, whether in writing or orally, in every context of all of the operations of all the institutions and then have all this enforced. This none too subtle approach would have the inevitable result of the strong languages (those languages which are powerful in the international economy) surviving and the weak languages succumbing. The “do nothing” approach is, effectively, a “do something” model – that “something” being to let things take their own course whatever the direction of that course may happen to be – without the necessity for difficult or unpopular decisions having to be made at a supranational level.

The existing lack of clear guidelines on which languages are to be used for which purposes has been described (*Quell* 1998: 305) as a linguistic maze. Most of the

published authors on language use within the European Union point to the technical difficulties experienced today within the institutions. Much has been made of the pressures which an enlarging membership has placed on translation and interpretation services, not only with regard to the technical delivery of such services but also, and more importantly, with regard to their accuracy. These authors all recount incidents illustrating the problems besetting the institutions. For example, in outlining how the delays experienced can amount to months or years, a case is cited (*Muller* 2002: 45) at the European Court of Justice concerning a cement cartel which created over twenty three thousand pages of translation and took twenty translators over a year to complete. That particular author echoes the disquiet expressed elsewhere by commenting that the criteria for deciding upon the working languages of the institutions have never been clarified.

The ability of the institutions to cope with the logistics of operating increased numbers of services as more countries join the Union has been questioned (*Phillipson* 2003: 24). The conclusion arrived at, in this case, is that most likely there will have to be restrictions on the use of newly arrived languages, especially in oral communication, otherwise the relay system will limp on, and the quality of communication will continue to suffer unless more drastic solutions are implemented. The assertion made is that changes in the operation of the language policy should be openly debated, after a thorough analysis of the issues, and the strengths and weaknesses of each possible change identified. The possibility had already been raised (*Ager* 2001: 66) of the whole enterprise collapsing under the burden of having just eleven official languages prior to 2004!

Unless decisions are made on how the system will cope with the continuing enlargement of the Union and the unwieldiness of the linguistic complexities, the result foreseen is more of the continuing tension which already exists between the use of a *lingua franca* and efforts to retain diversity. The dilemma is succinctly described (*Wright* 2000: 156) in these words:

‘Equality and liberty have always proved difficult to reconcile in democratic theory and practice. Nowhere is this more evident than in the question of

language. Equality is served by the eradication of linguistic difference and the construction of a community of communication that allows all to participate in the democratic life of the state. At the same time, the right to use one's language is a fundamental liberty which a democracy must respect.'

So does the solution lie in determining a definite regime for working languages and, at the same time, reducing the number of official languages or is the solution to be found in imposing a neutral, non-national language as a working language and having this taught in the schools of the member countries? And how would either of these "solutions" fit within the parameters of "equality" and "liberty" as defined by Wright?

What will happen if the Clayton's decision is made to let linguistic matters take their own course, according to the literature on this theme? If current trends continue, with the commercial world setting the pace, then all European languages other than English may (*Phillipson* 2003a: 79) be on a fast track towards second-class status. The argument advanced in this case is that united action driven by the supranational body is required if trends towards cultural homogenisation are to be resisted, let alone turned around, simply because individual nation states cannot do this by themselves.

What explanation can there be for an apparent paralysis at the highest level of the European Union to take decisive action on the issue of linguistic diversity? After all, decisions have been made on other difficult issues such as the euro. It is written (*Gubbins* 2002: 47) that linguistic policy is the one major policy which has been largely ignored by both planners and politicians, believing that it is the innate emotional appeal of language which leads to a non-decision. The issue is simply too contentious and is fraught with implications best avoided. In other words, the issue is "too hot to handle".

How long can the issue be ignored? Sooner or later (*Truchot* 2003: 109) the problems of a *lingua franca* must be addressed and measures taken to regulate their use, and to state clearly what their role should be, which languages would be concerned and how the functions of all the official languages should be distributed. Even one of the academic authors (See *van Els* already referred to above on page 35 and page 50) who does not regard the diversity of languages and cultures as inherently good *per se*, nevertheless agrees that the time has come that a decision *should* be made to

reorganise current institutional language practice with its too many drawbacks in the expectation that reorganisation might lead to a considerably higher quality of communication. The fundamental equality of all European Union languages being working languages is regarded as the core of the problem (2001: 349) for there is no linguistic insight that opposes the abandonment of this principle nor are the arguments for maintaining this principle tenable from a linguistic perspective.

Indeed, a reading of the published works shows that there is a clear consensus of opinion among academics that an analysis by the European Union of linguistic policies is overdue, even long overdue. But because the issue is politically sensitive, a serious analysis of how the present system operates in European Union institutions has never been undertaken. For Lepschy (1994: 12) it is basically not a question of finding the correct solution to a problem by examining the evidence available and using the model of rational, scientific explanation because the issue is too closely associated with people's attitudes and beliefs, and their ideological and political ramifications. It seems what the author is saying, in effect, is that no matter how many analyses are made of the problem any decision will not be based on the conclusions drawn from those analyses. What is involved is not like making changes to a building, not even like deciding where a road will go. Language policy issues are politically "explosive" issues that relate to the very identity of a person, how that person sees himself/herself in the world. Or, as was described by another (*Hüppauf* 2004: 15), the deep emotional attachment of people to a language they have been familiar with since childhood.

Do the sensitivity and complexity of language policy issues inevitably guarantee conflict ahead? A warning has been issued (*Ozolins* 2003: 75) that there is a danger in sitting back and doing nothing, that we should be very careful about accepting arguments for the inevitability of adopting global languages or for being unable to defend local languages out of respect for a supposed "free market". Mention has already been made of the opinion expressed in the academic literature that granting linguistic rights is a way of avoiding war sometime in the future. (Refer to page 52 above)

Lack of linguistic rights has been highlighted (*Skutnabb-Kangas* 2000: 435) as one of the causal factors in certain conflicts and linguistic affiliation has, at the same time, been viewed as a rightful mobilising factor in conflicts with multiple causes where power and resources are unevenly distributed along linguistic and ethnic lines. The dilemma of economics versus politics in the language issue (Refer to page 51 above) also accounts for why decisions are never made on this issue. The European Union is seen (*Pool* 1996: 161, 176) as displaying a continual struggle between a policy that confers equal status on multiple official languages and a policy that selects one language for sole official use. When asked whether or not the equal treatment of languages should be redefined or sacrificed for the sake of cost reduction, European Union elites typically respond “no”, it is claimed. Yet when allowed to make this exchange in daily life, the same elites often act in ways that imply “yes”.

The message given by *Euromosaic* is that smaller state language groups will end up facing the same problems as minority language groups if no action is forthcoming. The conclusion to the *Euromosaic* report (1996: 58) predicts that national languages will atrophy if the current rate of integration is allowed to continue unchecked without appropriate safeguards in place. Do Europeans want their national languages to decline or even wither? Over-reliance on English, it is affirmed (*Gubbins* 2002: 48), whatever the practicalities, is nevertheless impossible to reconcile with the declared notion of equal status for all European Union languages and is potentially damaging to future harmonious cooperation in Europe. One very strong advocate of language ecology is wary (*Phillipson* 2003a: 123) of changes in rules allowing an English-only system coming about through what is called the ‘back door’ method because this would result in downgrading the importance of diversity and legitimising discrimination. Meanwhile, an advocate for the use of a *lingua franca* (*Wright* 2004: 229, 233, 236) acknowledges that this is not a decision which will be made any time soon especially while the ethos of nation remains strong and before any ‘palliative measures’ are in place to offset the resulting imbalances and inequalities. For her the question is rather how to make the spread of English more acceptable, believing, as she does, that the message in a democratic European Union is more important than the medium – indeed the message may not be communicated without a *lingua franca* in use. She remains convinced that strict language equality cannot deliver the medium of

communication required by the projected rate of growth of the European Union's institutions.

Drawing a Conclusion from the Academic Literature on Linguistic Diversity

The theory is clear enough – all “official” languages, at least, are equal – but does the reality match the theory? Is *italiano* the equal of *deutsch*, and is *slovenčina* the equal of *slovenščina*? And are any of these languages the equal of English? While some (Wagner, Bech and Martinez 2002: 7) appear optimistic in their belief that the multiple authenticity (Refer to page 17 above) they refer to is proof of the European Union's desire that there should be no dominant languages or cultures, the majority of commentators on the role of languages in today's European Union seem to be emphatic in their reply. The answer these commentators give is a resounding NO! Interested observers of linguistic diversity issues have been invited to consider, for example, the role of Danish (Nelde 1995: 74) in the running of the European Union as opposed to the roles of English or French. In legal terms all three languages are on an equal footing, it is claimed, but in reality, French and English are far more important languages in the day to day affairs of the European Union and although everyone may use his/her own language, what is said will often be interpreted only through the major languages.

Typical of the views expressed in the academic literature (Truchot 2003: 102) is that whereas Community regulations explicitly stress a person's right to express themselves when dealing with the European Union in their own language, they are implicitly invited to use English. When they speak in an official capacity, members of an institution tend to comply with its internal linguistic regime and speak either in English or in French according to the circumstances, and as far as programmes are concerned, most of the time these are dealt with in English. It has been argued

(Phillipson 2003: 21) that while, in principle, the “official” languages have equal rights (with some exceptions) there is unofficial acceptance of a linguistic hierarchy with English and French at the top. In most other international fora in Europe – such as NATO, scientific writing, commerce, youth culture, media, among others – the claim continues, English is the sole dominant language. This academic is one of several commentators who argue that language problems in the European Union are, in fact, not addressed according to any recognised plan but are ‘resolved’ through the *laissez-faire* approach of matters being allowed to take their own course. Yet in fairness, however, it must be pointed out that, for example, native Russian speakers in the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have successfully availed themselves of the protection afforded by the European Union’s language “rules” to have changes made to existing and proposed language laws in those individual states.

Is the decision to preserve and guarantee linguistic diversity a decision to be made at the local (or regional) level – in accordance with the principle of *subsidiarity* – or must it be made at the national or at the supranational level? It has been asserted (Meyer 2004: 73) that it will be, in the first place, the decision of the national communities themselves, in particular the decision of their elites and of their younger generations, whether they choose to live and develop their own heritage in the continuous process of border-crossing exchange or, instead, prefer to accept English, particularly American English, as the expression of modernity and try to pose as Americans. The consequences of the latter, it is maintained, is that they would then risk resembling people who hope to be successful by copying the manners and products of others.

But for some the matter is not as simple as that. The language issue is complicated because the biggest threat to diversity is English, but English evokes different responses among nation states. Among long-standing Member States, situated in the west of Europe, there is no doubt that there lingers a deep distrust of what has been called (Braselmann 2004: 112) the linguistic and cultural enemy, the American Virus, and, certainly among the educated elite, a pronounced allergy to English. However, in the newer Member States, situated mainly in the east and the south, the “allergy” is to

other languages that are seen as having been dominant or, in reality, more domineering in their recent history. In these countries, English has the connotations of freedom and, among young people, pleasure and excitement. Furthermore, the reality is that while the spelling and pronunciation of English are not easy for non-native speakers, what people call “grammar” certainly is comparatively less difficult to grasp with a result that it is comparatively easy to acquire a basic knowledge of that language.

The conclusion that can be drawn from reading the academic literature on linguistic diversity in the European Union is that *laissez faire* is the language “policy” which will continue in the European Union in the near future. There does not appear to be the political will to either enforce English or legislate against English as the *lingua franca*. Linguistic diversity is simply too explosive an issue for such decisive action to be taken. One thing is certain: linguistic diversity is an issue that will not go away. And European Union membership is destined to expand. As of December 2008 there are twenty seven Member States. Croatia and Turkey are official candidates for membership. Macedonia, Bosnia, Albania, and Serbia, among others, have been told they can join when they satisfy the economic and political criteria of membership.

CHAPTER THREE: TALKING THE TALK ON LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

This Chapter explores the related themes of the social and economic benefits that would accrue from the learning of languages in addition to one's mother tongue as perceived by Members of the European Parliament. The following Members made significant contributions to the plenary debates during the fifth parliamentary term on these themes:

Table 3.1 Major contributors to the debates on the social and economic benefits of multilingualism

MEMBER	POLITICAL GROUP	MEMBER STATE	POLITICAL PARTY
Andreasen, Ole	ELDR	DA	Venstre
Aparicio Sánchez, Pedro	PSE	ES	Partido Socialista Obrero Español
Caudron, Gérard	GUE/NGL	FR	Socialiste Indépendant
De Clerq, Willy	PPE-DE	BE	Vlaamse liberalen en democraten
De Sarnez, Marielle	PPE-DE	FR	Mouvement Démocrate
Echerer, Raina	Verts/ALE	OS	Die Grünen - Die Grüne Alternative
Fatuzzo, Carlo	PPE-DE	IT	Partito Pensionati
Ferrer, Concepció	PPE-DE	ES	Unió Democràtica de Catalunya
Figueiredo, Ilda	GUE/NGL	PT	Coligação Democrática Unitária (PCP-PEV)
Fraisse, Geneviève	GUE/NGL	FR	Indépendant
Gill, Neena	PSE	UK	Labour Party
Graça Moura, Vasco	PPE-DE	PT	Partido Social Democrata
Hyland, Liam	UEN	IR	Fianna Fáil Party
Iivari, Ulpu	PSE	SU	Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue/Finlands Socialdemokratiska Parti
Karas, Othmar	PPE-DE	OS	Österreichische Volkspartei - Liste Ursula Stenzel
Klass, Christa	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands
Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Rodi	PPE-DE	HE	Nea Dimokratia
Mann, Thomas	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands Deutschlands
Marinos, Ioannis	PPE-DE	HE	Nea Dimokratia
Martens, Maria	PPE-DE	NL	Christen Democratisch Appèl
O'Toole, Barbara	PSE	UK	Labour Party
Pack, Doris	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands
Perry, Roy	PPE-DE	UK	Conservative and Unionist Party
Sanders-ten Holte, Maria	ELDR	NL	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Sbarbati, Luciana	ELDR	IT	Movimento Repubblicani Europei
Seppänen, Esko	GUE/NGL	SU	Vasemmistoliitto
Tannock, Charles	PPE-DE	UK	Conservative and Unionist Party
Thors, Astrid	ELDR	SU	Svenska folkpartiet
Van Brempt, Kathleen	PSE	BE	Socialistische Partij
van Dam, Rijk	EDD	NL	ChristenUnie - Staatkundig Gereformeerde Parti
Wyn, Eurig	Verts/ALE	UK	Plaid Cymru - Parti of Wale
Zabell, Theresa	PPE-DE	ES	Partido Popular
Zimeray, François	PSE	FR	Parti socialiste

Linguistic Diversity – A “Matchless” Asset

‘Cultural and linguistic diversity are matchless assets’ – Karin Junker (DE)

‘Boosting the learning of foreign languages will bring European citizens closer together by giving them the means to communicate, and thus get to know each other and forge the links to make the concept of European citizenship a reality’ – Gérard Caudron (FR)

Even a cursory reading of the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term of the European Parliament reveals considerable support among the Members of that Parliament for the encouragement of foreign language learning. The learning of foreign languages was considered integral to respecting the cultures of people from other Member States as well as a means to better communication among people from all Member States. With respect for the cultures of others would come a diminution of xenophobia, racism and intolerance. This first part of Chapter Three explores the attitudes expressed by Members of the European Parliament towards linguistic diversity and considers whether diversity *per se* was regarded as constituting the very essence of European Union “culture”.

On Wednesday 12 April 2000, *rapporteur* Vasco Graça Moura¹ rose, on behalf of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport, to address the European Parliament on the proposal, which was to be voted on the next day, for a European Year of Languages in 2001. After praising the way in which his fellow Portuguese countrymen and women had over the centuries learned so many foreign languages as well as spreading the Portuguese language around the world, Graça Moura extolled the virtues of the European Year of Languages which was to be a joint initiative of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. At the heart of the project was a person’s mother tongue which he described as a human being’s fundamental right. While not downplaying the economic implications in the fight against unemployment,² Graça Moura saw a knowledge of other languages as being essentially –

‘intrinsic to the construction of a European citizenship, since it opens the door to a greater knowledge of other people’s cultures and encourages tolerance and peaceful coexistence. By doing so, it is also an important factor in

combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other unacceptable forms of discrimination.’

There was, according to him, ‘enormous potential’ in the plan proposed for ‘positive results’, a plan which would encourage language learning without offending the principle of *subsidiarity*. [Refer to Chapter One above] The immediate response to his address from one Member was almost euphoric,³ the Member even taking the opportunity to lavish praise on the poetry written by the *rapporteur*! Her hope that the measures planned for the Year of the Languages did not amount to ‘one-day wonders’ was applauded in the Chamber, yet one might be excused for thinking that the reference to being able to gain full access to the internal market would have qualified her approach as, in the words of another Member,⁴ ‘functional and utilitarian’. Readily conceding that learning at least two languages did, in fact, aid the mobility of students and workers, this other Member’s goals were far loftier (and also applauded): ‘language facilitates thought and thought facilitates citizenship’. Europe’s goal should be no less than to take on an identity based on a range of identities rather than being content with a common ground of differences. (Significantly, however, Parliament did not warm to a request from the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance [Verts/ALE] to debate a sub-item on “human rights” entitled “Outbreaks of racism in Germany and the killing of Alberto Adriano” that related to persecution based on language and skin colour in Neissen which spokesperson Elisabeth Schroedter said would have amounted to a clear statement that ‘Europe has a vocation to be a multicultural Europe’.⁵)

In July and September of 2000 debates took place in the European Parliament regarding the European film industry and the Community audio-visual policy respectively. Both of these subjects are intertwined with issues of linguistic diversity. Speakers in the debates recognised that film was a medium by which cultural and linguistic diversity could be both encouraged and celebrated,⁶ although the Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party [ELDR], while commending the role of a programme such as *MEDIA Plus* in strengthening cultural and linguistic diversity, was opposed to spending an ‘exorbitant amount of taxpayers’ money on cultural policy’.⁷ Commissioner Viviane Reding was very keen to remind Members that respect and promotion of linguistic diversity was a priority for the Commission.⁸

On audio-visual policy, the Parliament was urged to seize the opportunity which digital technology provided to promote pluralism and linguistic diversity.⁹ This view received written support welcoming intervention by the European Union to achieve this goal¹⁰ and Members were reminded of the role which public service broadcasting can play to bring these ends to fruition.¹¹ Such an intervention was not, however, welcomed into the field of educational quality assessment which, according to Ilda Figueiredo at least,¹² was properly the jurisdiction of the individual Member States which also had the responsibility for ensuring linguistic diversity in their own countries. This latter opinion is strikingly similar to that expressed by the Non-attached MEP Bruno Gollnisch two years later. On that occasion, he also opposed any attempt to impose uniform criteria for the structure of university qualifications. Not only would such an attempt offend against the principle of *subsidiarity*, but it would also reduce the diversity of the existing ‘distinctive academic or scientific models’ which he regarded as a ‘mark of progress’. Gollnisch added, ‘European civilisation has created diversity in all areas’.¹³

There was comment in the Chamber in early October 2000 on the Danes’ ‘no’ vote to the euro. Clearly some of the parliamentarians read more into this decision than it being a mere rejection of the euro’s associated currency regime. It was seen as a warning to respect national cultural and linguistic diversity,¹⁴ remembering that Europe was made up of different peoples and nations.¹⁵ Indeed, the ‘model of European civilisation’ was said to be one that allowed for the retention of different languages.¹⁶ Later that same month, the diversity of cultures was affirmed as a fundamental element of Europe, finding expression ‘first and foremost’¹⁷ in the diversity of languages. The message given was if you believe in the diversity of cultures, you have equally to support and encourage the diversity of languages. This respect for linguistic diversity, Parliament was told,¹⁸ was enshrined in Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and should mean a ban on discrimination based on language.

As the plenary debates for 2000 drew to an end, Neena Gill of the Group of the Party of European Socialists [PSE] presented a report¹⁹ on behalf of the Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy on the promotion of linguistic diversity on the Internet. The basis of her report was an assertion that linguistic

diversity was ‘the key priority for this Parliament’ and the necessary adoption of ‘an inclusive approach in relation to languages’. In the debate that followed the presentation of the Gill report, support for the *rapporteur*’s approach was readily forthcoming from a number of directions, including the draftspersons for the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport²⁰ and the Committee on Budgets,²¹ the latter opposing what he saw as the domination of English on the internet. Esko Seppänen, on behalf of the Committee on Budgets, summed it up this way:

‘Seventy per cent of the content of the Internet is in English, but Europe’s challenge is the greater utilisation of our rich linguistic heritage. Although linguistic differences might mean extra costs, multilingual content is an important precondition of democracy [in the European Union].’

The Gill report was extolled as providing the opportunity to both ‘safeguard [our cultural diversity] for future generations’²² and promote multilingualism with the help of the new technology.²³ Nevertheless, the report did not find favour with all. The Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities [EDD] considered that the report’s approach to linguistic and cultural diversity was too negative.²⁴ This, it must be said, appeared to be very much a minority view, since Members from other Groups were excited by the opportunity afforded Europe ‘to exploit its linguistic wealth more fully’²⁵ and ‘to respond to the challenge of the markets’ and ‘export its cultural values’.²⁶

Early in 2001 another report from the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport came to Parliament, this time concerning electronic publishing. The essence of the report²⁷ was that Europe’s linguistic and cultural diversities should be fostered using electronic publishing, a policy embraced²⁸ because it would inevitably have the effect of preserving and improving those diversities. The Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats [PPE-DE] gave its support to the report and proposed a European Year of the Book as well as one day – 23 April – to be set aside as European Reading Day, both proposals designed to safeguard the ‘linguistic diversity of the European peoples’.²⁹ Safeguarding the ‘continuity of the creative act’³⁰ by ensuring copyright and payment to authors was one practical matter though that had to be addressed.

Education and training³¹ as well as experience abroad³² were obvious ways to an increased appreciation of Europe's linguistic heritage, although the wealth of linguistic diversity was seen as a potential dilemma³³ if Member States were asked to insist that higher education be restricted to those who have a qualification in a modern language other than their own. If, as was argued,³⁴ respect for multilingualism derives from respect for minorities and respect for cultural diversity, would the Commission be disposed to grant additional funding for films produced in countries with languages, such as Swedish, Danish or Portuguese, which are not widespread?³⁵ Commissioner Monti re-affirmed³⁶ that cultural diversity was 'a key point in our Community'. This position that was also made clear by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of Ministers:

'... the safeguarding, deployment and development of cultural diversity, and indeed of linguistic diversity... I believe that we all regard them as fundamental values...' ³⁷

Earlier that same year, the Commission had made clear in the Parliament it was anxious that its own staffing reflected the diversity of languages existing in this 'unique multinational and multilingual Union'.³⁸

The recognition of linguistic diversity was hailed as a way of creating a Europe of 'security, peace, culture and individuality'³⁹ while a report on cultural co-operation⁴⁰ pointed to the diversity of national and regional cultures as the foundation for the rich character of European civilisation. Peace was fostered through familiarisation with other cultures,⁴¹ not by a determination to achieve uniformity.⁴² But for a minority the term "culture" was ambiguous and over-used to the extent that it had little real meaning left attached to it.⁴³ The word "culture" was being used when "markets" or "business" was what was really meant, was the assertion made. However, the question was asked in Parliament of the President-in-Office of the Council representing the Belgian Presidency as to whether European cultural, social and political diversity at *all levels within Member States* should not be included as an 'important part' of the debate to take place in 2002 and 2003 on the future of the European Union especially since:

'... there is a greater diversity and richness, represented culturally and socially by the historic peoples and nations of Europe and, politically, by the federated

States, constitutional regions and autonomous communities, in particular, and also, of course, on another level, by the purely administrative regions, the provinces and the local authorities.’⁴⁴

With regard to Questions directed to the Council, it is worth recording that in 1983 Council agreed by way of the Solemn Declaration on European Union to answer all parliamentary Questions that were addressed to it. The previous situation – set out in Article 140 of the European Economic Community Treaty – was that the Commission *only* was obligated to reply orally or in writing to Questions put forward by the ‘Assembly or its Members’.

Significantly, the reply, on behalf of the Belgian Presidency of the Council, by Annemie Nyets-Uytebroeck was to the effect that European Union institutions do not involve themselves with the constitutions of individual Member States unless there appear breaches of fundamental human rights: ‘This is our ongoing policy. I think that we should not confuse respect for diversities with a departure of this nature.’ I emphasise “significantly” because the reply exposes a conflict clearly apparent when reading the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term between the expectations of some Members of the European Parliament on the one hand and the willingness of the Council and Commission on the other hand over intervention in the affairs of individual Member States on issues of linguistic diversity. This conflict is explored in more detail in Chapter Five below.

For its part, the Commission’s view as presented in the Chamber⁴⁵ was that the end of 2001 was certainly not intended to be the end of European Year of Languages initiatives. Parliament was reminded that Council had only just recently ‘adopted an important resolution on the promotion of linguistic diversity’ which itself was yet again described as one of the defining characteristics of the European Union.

At the start of 2002, the newly elected President of the Parliament⁴⁶ celebrated his election by addressing Parliament in his mother tongue Irish, ‘an official but not a working language’ in order to emphasise his commitment to cultural pluralism and diversity which he described as the *sine qua non* of Europe. The President’s stirring speech even elicited a response from a Senegalese-born French MEP who expressed the hope that he too might be given one opportunity in the current term to address

Parliament in his own mother tongue, Bambara – ‘for that is what we mean by diversity and is also a way of giving each person recognition, for, despite all our differences, we have a future to build together’.⁴⁷

And the following year, during the plenary debates, both the Commission and the Council underscored the obligation to uphold the principle of linguistic diversity, whether that be in trade negotiations⁴⁸ or a multilateral approach to world problems,⁴⁹ at the same time reiterating that it was the responsibility of Member States how they incorporated linguistic diversity in their education systems.⁵⁰ The basis for this and similar official answers is Article 149(1) of the Treaty establishing the European Community, an Article that defines the competencies of the Community. As is demonstrated in the plenary debates, it has been an Article relied on not only by MEPs⁵¹ but also by leaders of States that hope one day to join the Community.⁵² In a similar vein, the Commission was urged to incorporate Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights expressly forbidding discrimination on grounds of language into any new Constitution.⁵³

In June 2003, Commissioner Reding told Parliament that the European Year of Languages had not only given the official languages ‘their say’ but had also facilitated the provision of funding languages ‘actually spoken in the territory, if that was what associations or citizens wanted’.⁵⁴ She was at pains, however, to prioritise continuing support for traditional languages. In a debate on the *Erasmus Mundus* programme some months later, the fostering of linguistic diversity as the cornerstone of cultural diversity was applauded as was the requirement for students in the programme to be cognisant with two European Union languages.⁵⁵

In the build-up to the Year of the Languages parliamentarians had embraced the notion of teaching European languages to Europeans – so much so that one could justifiably label this exercise as a “campaign”.⁵⁶ Indeed, it was suggested that it was of ‘paramount importance’⁵⁷ that the citizens of the [fifteen] Member States learn the languages of their fellow citizens, not least because learning language was a means to raise awareness of cultural diversity. Gérard Caudron expressed the benefits succinctly:

‘Opening up to other cultures and finding out about the traditions of our European neighbours are essential ways of combating intolerance and racism engendered by fear of the unknown.’⁵⁸

Moreover, foreign language learning was seen as the key to integration. But a word of warning was sounded that, without adequate budgetary funding, any such “campaign” would degenerate into a ‘just a lot of hot air’.⁵⁹ The idea of setting aside funds to assist programmes which advocated studying in another Member State and consequently learning to speak the language of that country received endorsement from even a self-confessed unlikely source who was willing to concede that Erasmus seemed able to achieve some of the results it expected of itself.⁶⁰

The consensus view of contributions to the plenary debates was that the knowledge of languages not only enabled people to communicate with others ‘in the right way’⁶¹ but also brought with it knowledge of other ways of life, what one Member⁶² described as ‘everything that is so important for us as Europe grows together’. Making contact with the thinking, language and culture of the other countries which make up the European Union was said ‘to encourage familiarity with European patrimony’ and not just serve to make finding employment easier.⁶³ And Parliament had been enjoined⁶⁴ to accept as the type of modern “model European” a joiner living in a Viennese suburb who ‘speaks four languages and is known as something of a philosopher’. The promotion of language learning was a bulwark against intolerance⁶⁵ but should never be confused with the advocacy of linguistic purity which became a weapon in the armoury of racist ideologists.⁶⁶

The ELDR Group urged the Commission to produce ‘active measures’ that would promote the teaching of at least two of the Community languages in every Member State with teaching not merely targeted at the young. Linguistic education had to be developed and supported by the Commission, the spokesperson⁶⁷ told Parliament. Agreement with these aims was readily forthcoming from the PPE-DE Group,⁶⁸ and also in a written contribution from one of the most regular Socialist participants in debates on linguistic matters.⁶⁹ Later that year another of the Socialist Group⁷⁰ was assured by the Commission, in response to a Question, that promotion of language learning would not be limited to urban areas so leaving the countryside ‘at a severe disadvantage’ as the Member asking the Question feared might happen.

Comments from Members on the importance, indeed the necessity, of learning languages other than one's mother tongue continued, as one might reasonably expect, in the Year of Languages. Typical is the opinion of Pervenche Berès: '... we neglect at our peril investment in... languages' ⁷¹ In answer to a Question⁷² as to which languages had been put forward by the Member States to be included in programmes associated with the Year of Languages, Commissioner Reding indicated that not one language was excluded by the Member States, a decision she described as 'very important' and a 'marvellous thing'. Just two months later, she was telling Parliament that 'things are moving' and that 'everyone is discussing the subject'. She even believed⁷³ that those who were doing nothing to promote linguistic diversity were having twinges of conscience!

The ELDR Group very clearly spelled out its own position on linguistic diversity at the same time as reaffirming its commitment to the principle of *subsidiarity* aimed to satisfy the desire of people that decisions are made as close to them as possible:

'[ELDR] has no doubt that culture is a fundamental component of the [European Union's] identity. Our group believes that respect for, and promotion of, cultural and linguistic diversity and of the common cultural inheritance is an essential factor in integration and the promotion of human individuality. We want to see a European cultural policy which is not in any way aimed at uniformity but which offers the kind of identity that arises in the encounter of differences – a policy which contributes to social cohesion and which is essential to the sense of being a European citizen.'

⁷⁴

Linguistic diversity would surely be an objective shared by all member countries given the danger in a globalised world of 'passively adopting one particular dominant culture'.⁷⁵ In addition, there was a call in Parliament for investment to be made in e-cinema so allowing producers to more easily make different language versions of their films.⁷⁶

As the end of the Year of Languages was drawing near, the Commission was able to rejoice⁷⁷ in all the enthusiasm for linguistic diversity which had manifested itself by the amount of discussion and lobbying which had taken place throughout the European Union. But, as one Member⁷⁸ found out when trying to determine what action had been taken to implement the unanimous view of Parliament, contained in

the report referred to at the very beginning of this chapter, that ancient Greek and Latin ‘as the root languages of today’s languages’ should be taught in all secondary schools, the Commission was not in the position to determine the contents of school curricula. Such contents were set by respective Ministers of Education in each Member State in accordance with the principle of *subsidiarity*, although the Commission’s view was quite clear that the greatest possible range of languages taught the better since ‘multilingualism represents Europe’s future, because it reflects cultural diversity, which is our true wealth’.⁷⁹ Again, it was made clear to the Parliament at the start of the following year that in the Commission’s view basic skills for survival in a knowledge-based economy certainly included the learning of foreign languages.⁸⁰

The speeches given in Parliament in early 2002 show no dissent from this standpoint although Members were reminded that ‘respect for the language to which [our fellow citizens] are rightfully attached’ is a key objective.⁸¹ Maybe it was in the pursuit of this objective that one Belgian⁸² claimed that in some Member States language learning was considered unimportant to the extent that ‘language education is increasingly in jeopardy’. It had previously been admitted that there was a problem in the whole of the United Kingdom in encouraging the acquisition of language skills ‘across the board’.⁸³ This particular Belgian Member’s request was for the issue of language education to be addressed urgently.

Most speakers considered solutions to any perceived problems lay in programmes already established in the European Union. An appeal made in the Chamber⁸⁴ for foreign language learning which ‘as everyone has said... is so incredibly important’ to take place in kindergarten received applause. Teaching foreign languages to very young children found favour with the Spanish Presidency of the Council as made clear by José Aznar Lopez to the Parliament on 20 March 2002 when referring to Council backing for the “Working Programme for 2010” (for educational systems) and the teaching of at least two Member State languages.

Yet most praise was reserved for *Socrates*. It was seen as a means to increased knowledge of other languages (and cultures) as a way of achieving harmony in Europe ‘which is something we all want’⁸⁵ as well as ‘overcoming cultural prejudice

and stereotypical concepts'.⁸⁶ The "Youth for Europe programme" was also lauded⁸⁷ for fostering the fundamental values of tolerance, diversity and solidarity by promoting additional languages and cultures. Maintaining funds for the two action programmes, Socrates and Youth for Europe, was considered core to the promotion of lifelong learning and foreign language learning. Typical of the sentiments expressed in the debates is this written by a Portuguese MEP:

‘... I believe that maintaining Community funds for promoting exchanges between European students, specifically under these two Community action programmes, *Socrates* and *Youth for Europe*, is extremely important... I therefore agree with maintaining these programmes and the budgetary approach that is proposed, because it is of crucial importance that we continue to promote the creation of a European educational area through informal educational experiences amongst young people, including physical mobility in particular, to promote lifelong learning, foreign language learning...’⁸⁸

One aspect of the issue of xenophobia is the extent to which newly arrived immigrants to European Union Member States should be required to learn the official language of the new host country as proof of their willingness to integrate into their new homeland. The question of immigrants from outside the European Union and their mother tongues is *outside* the scope of this research. However, the comment made by one Member⁸⁹ that immigrants should understand that they need to make an effort to integrate linguistically because to suggest otherwise amounted to ‘nonsensical political correctness’ followed nearly four months on from a Member of the same Group⁹⁰ telling Parliament that it was not ‘acceptable’ to demand that immigrants acquire a knowledge of the host’s official language as a condition for being granted residency status – something that she claimed the ‘Right’ were seeking. This latter approach was supported by spokespersons⁹¹ from both the PPE-DE Group and the PSE Group, the two major Political Groups in Parliament, who regarded the promotion, as opposed to enforcement, of language learning as the desirable pathway to integration into society.

A debate took place on 11 April 2002 regarding a report on strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education. It was said that Parliament should make it its concern to ensure that more languages were ‘taught and learned’⁹² in higher education institutions thus enabling people to ‘have a feel for Europe’.⁹³ A

command of languages was regarded as indicative of a high level of education. Investment in language training⁹⁴, providing incentives for student exchange programmes and learning⁹⁵, as well as the opportunity to ‘perfect another European language, which is so important for us as [European Union] citizens’⁹⁶ were the calls emanating from other Members, calls that the Commission⁹⁷ was obviously in sympathy with.

Four months on from its conclusion, the Year of Languages was still being hailed as a success; indeed, it was seen as the prototype for achieving advances in other areas, such as sport. The keys to its success, Parliament was told, were that it involved every sort of educational organisation⁹⁸ and was readily adopted by the people themselves.⁹⁹ There was still some apprehension, it must be acknowledged, aired in the Parliament as to the threat linguistic diversity faced by ‘increasing globalisation’¹⁰⁰ and also as to the risk¹⁰¹ to the principle of equality among working languages in the European Union. In mid-2002 the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport was again wanting measures¹⁰² taken to ensure mastery of one’s mother tongue as well as the learning of other languages in the fight against illiteracy, something which one Member¹⁰³ asserted would only come about if there was a ‘proper follow-up’ to the Year of Languages. Acquisition of foreign language skills was again endorsed during the debate on the same day by Commissioner Reding who readily admitted that in doing so she was ‘returning to one of my favourite themes’.

Foreign language teaching was viewed as not only central to encouraging a ‘better knowledge of Europe’¹⁰⁴ but as providing the tools of communication which empower people as members of society.¹⁰⁵ In order to properly communicate a person needed to be ‘in possession of’ languages which were the tools of communication, especially as ‘it is those who communicate who count in society’. Members were told that languages were the foundation of culture,¹⁰⁶ and there was backing at the highest level for a new European Union constitution which would guarantee linguistic diversity (while at the same time reinforcing solidarity).¹⁰⁷

Major debates surrounding the *Erasmus* programme and E-learning took place in the week commencing 7 April 2003. Parliament had proposed a change of name to *Erasmus Mundus* for the programme whose aims, as the *rapporteur*¹⁰⁸ explained,

were to make European higher education more attractive to students and teachers from other parts of the world and to increase the links among European universities in order to improve the quality as well as the competitiveness of European higher education in the wider world. Since language learning was to continue to remain a priority for the European Union, one of the key elements of the programme proposed was the requirement that students learn or use at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue. The *rapporteur* referred to Romano Prodi's belief that 'language-learning is one of the main ways of promoting genuine understanding between different cultures', adding that 'all possible means' should be used to encourage the promotion of language learning.

The immediate response from the Commission¹⁰⁹ was to accept the programme's new title along with a re-affirmation that 'linguistic diversity must clearly be part of *Erasmus Mundus*, as it is the basis of cultural diversity'. There is no doubt that those who contributed to the debate were overwhelmingly enthusiastic for the proposals which would give third country students the opportunity to learn the languages¹¹⁰ of the two host countries leading to written and oral competence – 'an objective we should constantly pursue'¹¹¹. After all, it was said, if Europe could contribute anything at all to the world then it was its linguistic diversity,¹¹² and a multilingual Europe was a knowledge-based Europe.¹¹³ Among the challenges acknowledged¹¹⁴ was the continuing need to develop the linguistic capacities of students throughout the European Union.

Speaking for the PPE-DE Group, Doris Pack declared that *Erasmus Mundus* was proof that 'we have a multiplicity of languages and do not express ourselves in only one language, the so called *lingua franca*, English'. She was at pains, on behalf of PPE-DE, to refute the view that an accent on language learning was not important because learning Europe's languages helps the students who study there to 'grasp its cultural diversity'. She then made a somewhat caustic appeal, which, it must be said, earned applause in the Chamber, to those involved in the Convention:

'... these measures – *Socrates*, *Erasmus*, *Erasmus Mundus* – should not be merely support measures, but rather supplementary competences, which we value, and which constitute the heart of the European Union. That is something you could find out if you were at last to talk with the public instead of constantly peering at your books.'¹¹⁵

In a minority opinion, one Member,¹¹⁶ while in agreement that students be given the opportunity to participate in language courses, did not think that languages should be a criterion for receiving an *Erasmus Mundus* bursary. Furthermore, there were some practical concerns aired¹¹⁷ if the ‘stringent rule’ to require the use of two languages spoken in the countries in which the institutions involved in the programme were located was to be enforced such as attracting young people to pursue a degree requiring a combination of Finnish (or Swedish), Latvian and Estonian.

Education institutional networking via the Internet was universally supported in the plenary debates for fostering language learning¹¹⁸ and intercultural dialogue¹¹⁹ as well as servicing the needs of students in remote areas to achieving these goals.¹²⁰ There was, it would appear, overall support among MEPs for greater ‘openness to other languages’¹²¹ in higher education.

Seán Ó Neachtain¹²² had earlier complained that the Commission had not revealed its intention to ‘bring forward any worthwhile initiatives in 2003’ aimed at assisting Member States to develop their cultural dimension, including languages. On that occasion, the complaint was met with a reference to, *inter alia*, Commission support for educational partnerships under the *Comenius* programme, a programme which was open to all schools and the objectives of which included the learning of languages.

‘What could be more important than knowing our neighbours, their culture and their language?’ Olga Zrihen¹²³ rhetorically asked Parliament at the beginning of June 2003. She then hailed ‘Our Europe, that melting pot of cultures, languages and people’ which, she said, had been made possible thanks to free movement and study programmes. This is, of course, a sentiment which found expression in one way or another in many of the speeches delivered in the fifth parliamentary term. There was manifestly a clear distinction in the minds of many speakers between “Our Europe” and the United States of America model with its emphasis on one language and ‘no culture’:

‘Knowing our neighbours’ language and culture better means understanding them better and respecting them, and so I see language as performing an essential task in the sense that knowledge of other people’s languages promotes peace.’¹²⁴

This view of the connection between the acceptance and celebration of different languages and the maintenance of peace in society is well represented in the contemporary academic literature, such as the writing of Tove Skutnabb-Kangas [Refer to Chapter Two above].

The new *Erasmus Mundus* programme was again debated in the Parliament in October of 2003. The *rapporteur*¹²⁵ reminded Members of the programme's priorities which had the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity as its second priority, with only the change of name from *Erasmus World* ranked ahead of this. Once again, a clear distinction was drawn with the American model making the European plan to expect students to learn at least two foreign languages 'a sound alternative'.¹²⁶ The Member drew the attention of her fellow parliamentarians to the fact that the expectation on students to learn two foreign languages amounted to a *conditio sine qua non* for anyone from her own country, the Netherlands.

The expectation of language learning as being integral to the *Erasmus Mundus* programme was such a 'very important point'¹²⁷ that to be made 'genuinely appealing' the necessary funding should be provided. Now was the time to insist on tightening up the wording on the learning of two foreign languages. As one French Member of the PSE Group said:

'Where the Union's language policy is concerned, we have often protested in this Chamber about those governments who were not making it compulsory to learn two foreign languages in their countries. Some still do not do so. We will exert all the pressure we can in support of this policy and we are pleased to have found an opportunity to do so here.'¹²⁸

It was a topic on which there seemed to be as close to a consensus as possible. One Member went so far as to say that the plan in favour of the learning of other languages deserved to be 'passionately supported'¹²⁹ and another said that it should be the European Union itself that ought to award the quality mark to the courses which required 'good proficiency in the languages of at least two Member States'.¹³⁰

There was renewed enthusiasm clearly evident in the debating chamber that *Erasmus Mundus* would 'open up'¹³¹ Europe to languages and, as a consequence, promote European values. And the written *verbali* on the topic were also fully in support of the

principle of promoting linguistic diversity by emphasising how important this principle was to the European Union.¹³²

In summary, support for the Year of Languages and respect for linguistic diversity were forthcoming from all the political groupings present in the European Parliament during the fifth parliamentary term. Sentiments such as “every year should be a year of languages” and “the right to speak one’s mother tongue is a fundamental right” encapsulate the feelings of many of the MEPs on these issues. The PPE-DE Group supplied a number of speakers on several different occasions (including Members from the United Kingdom!) to reinforce their commitment to linguistic diversity and their enthusiasm was mirrored in the contributions by Members from PSE, ELDR, GUE/NGL and Verts/ALE. The ELDR Group emphasised the role that promotion of linguistic diversity would make to greater tolerance and acceptance of other people in the enlarged European Union, while speakers from PSE and GUE/NGL believed that peace could be achieved through the maintenance of linguistic diversity.

Members who participated in the plenary debates from the UEN and EDD Groups as well as NI speakers were at pains to emphasise the need for respect for “nations” and “national cultures” and the languages that are “rightfully attached to those nations”. These particular Members were certainly less enthusiastic towards the concept of “European citizenship”.

On the matter of a European film industry and a Community audio-visual policy, the PPE-DE Group embraced the use of digital technology as a means of promoting linguistic diversity and were supported by PSE and GUE/NGL. The ELDR Group were reluctant to spend too much taxpayer money on a cultural policy for the European Union but had no such reservations in promoting multilingual content on the Internet and for this cause were vocally supported by PPE-DE, PSE and GUE/NGL, with only EDD expressing any dissent. Fostering linguistic diversity through electronic publishing was advocated by PPE-DE, PSE and GUE/NGL.

When it came time to debate the future of *Erasmus Mundus*, the idea of active measures to promote the teaching of two foreign languages being implemented in every Member State, with due regard to the principle of *subsidiarity* (of course), received the support of PPE-DE, PSE, ELDR, GUE/NGL and Verts/ALE. For the two

largest political groupings in the European Parliament from 2000 to 2003 – PPE-DE and PSE – the promotion of language learning was seen as the desirable pathway to integration with society.

Overall, the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term indicate that linguistic diversity was regarded as being desirable *per se* and to be the very essence of European Union “culture”, as well as a means to prevent and combat discrimination.

Acquiring Additional Languages and the Mobility of Labour

‘... if we consider our languages as bridges rather than obstacles, if we recognise and exploit the benefits they offer, they can form the foundations of a European market...’ – Raina Echerer (OS)

Nineteen Members contributed to this theme, namely that the acquisition of additional languages allows easier access to the labour and goods markets and facilitates labour mobility. Over half (eleven) of these Members were from the Group of the European People’s Party and European Democrats [PPE-DE]. Others were from Group of the Party of European Socialists [PSE]; Union for Europe of the Nations Group [UEN]; Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance [Verts/ALE]; Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party [ELDR] and Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities [EDD].

In April 2000, Ole Andreasen,¹³³ speaking to the proposed programme for the European Year of Languages 2001 on behalf of the ELDR, and having acknowledged the obvious significance of European languages to the continent’s culture and civilisation, argued that European Union citizens would be more likely to find employment in another country if they possessed good foreign language skills. Ioannis Marinos¹³⁴ also wanted to emphasise the ‘considerable’ economic benefit that accrued from learning more than one language. Christa Klass,¹³⁵ for her part, illustrated this by reference to her own region of Trier pointing out that while Trier itself was in Germany, many of that region’s inhabitants worked in Luxembourg or

did business with Belgium or France. The next day, François Zimeray submitted his view in writing that the ability to speak more than one European language was a defence in the battle against unemployment, particularly youth unemployment:

‘... giving Europeans the best training for the future, from their earliest youth, whatever their origin and level of education, above all means giving them the ability to speak languages other than their mother tongue... Speaking another European language can clearly be a key to success for those young people.’¹³⁶

Charles Tannock¹³⁷ extended this argument but in a different direction, saying that he wanted to make sure that any European Charter of Fundamental Rights did not prohibit a Member State from refusing employment to another State’s citizen who did not speak the official language of the country where he was seeking employment. However, Raina Echerer¹³⁸ best summed up the mood of the plenary debates of 2000 in December. She used the analogy of the ‘bridge’ as opposed to the ‘obstacle’ – an analogy much favoured by current Multilingualism Commissioner Leonard Orban – to urge that the benefits of many different languages might be exploited not only to form the basis of a European market but also to give the European Union a ‘certain independence’.

By 2001 the demands of the modern knowledge economy seemed to be prompting some Members to declare that knowledge of more than one or two languages was imperative for commercial survival. Willy De Clercq,¹³⁹ a Dutch speaking Belgian and another member of the PPE-DE Group, referred to a *Eurostat* survey which had found that only forty-five per cent of European Union citizens could conduct a conversation in any language but their mother tongue. He proposed that, in order to promote integration and opportunities for students in the labour market, knowledge of three languages should be the minimum goal. According to Barbara O’Toole,¹⁴⁰ educational systems capable of teaching language skills throughout a person’s life were a prerequisite to achieving labour mobility. A written Question was directed to the Belgian Presidency of the Council by Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou in October.¹⁴¹ In that Question she pointed to the ‘sluggish’ nature of the mobility of labour in Europe due to language problems and cultural differences. She contended that gaining a qualification in a country other than one’s own was more likely to create a European employment market than either the *Erasmus* or *Socrates* programmes. The essence of

the reply by a representative of the Belgian Presidency was that the European Community's powers were limited to support for and encouragement of only individual Member States' actions in that regard. One Member¹⁴² was definitely more forthright and assessed a European labour market as being 'pie in the sky' given the language barriers that existed. At the end of the calendar year, Carlo Fatuzzo¹⁴³, speaking to the *Nobilis Report* on increasing employment in Europe, made the claim that a single European second language was essential if labour mobility was to become a reality in the European Union. A person could not move about without knowing at least one language in common with all other Europeans, he claimed!

The exigencies of a growing and open internal market and an increasingly multicultural society were alluded to early in 2002 by Maria Martens¹⁴⁴ with her assertion that the importance of languages was growing. Later that same month, her colleague Thomas Mann¹⁴⁵ declared, on behalf of all the PPE-DE Members, that knowledge of languages was among the requirements to provide access to the labour markets of Europe. As the *rapporteur* on behalf of the Committee of Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport, Marielle De Sarnez, was to put it: 'Language learning is an undisputed factor of mobility'.¹⁴⁶ This particular view was emphasised by Roy Perry, from the United Kingdom,¹⁴⁷ who gained applause from parliamentarians with his acknowledgement that, while linguistic skills were important for labour mobility, there was a distinct lack of linguistic skills among students in Great Britain. The Conservative and Unionist Party representative then lambasted the recent British Government's 'appalling' decision to allow secondary students not to learn any foreign language at all. That point was reiterated just over six months later – on that occasion by Eurig Wyn,¹⁴⁸ of the Verts/ALE grouping, who regretted cutbacks to the compulsory teaching of foreign languages in the United Kingdom since linguistic barriers were 'one of the main impediments to mobility'.

The terminology of economics – specifically, the boosting of 'human capital' – was openly used in the debates¹⁴⁹ to promote language skills programmes. In October of 2002, when the action plan for mobility and assistance for innovative small and medium-sized enterprises was on the agenda, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou¹⁵⁰ again highlighted language skills as an essential ingredient in the mix that would alleviate what she called the 'abysmal' state of mobility. The very limited nature of this

mobility illustrated, according to this Greek Member, the difficulties at the heart of European integration. Marielle De Sarnez wrote that any measures in education to achieve greater labour mobility had to include as a fundamental the learning of a second language:

‘Access to education and to lifelong learning, and all the measures taken to promote the mobility of young people and workers will make a fundamental contribution to the stimulation of employment in Europe... Education should be centred around the learning of a second Community language...’¹⁵¹

This statement would fairly seem to typify the nature of contributions to the plenary debates on this topic in 2002.

In 2003, while praising the European Union’s ability to promote educational cooperation programmes, Liam Hyland¹⁵² referred to the internal market that allows for the free movement of people and urged that continuing opportunities be given for the learning of different languages if the goal of the European Union as a growing and prospering political entity was to be achieved. On the same day, Theresa Zabell,¹⁵³ while joining in the sustained congratulations extended to *rapporteur* De Sarnez on her *Erasmus Mundus Report*, asserted that being able to speak one or two languages apart from their own would prepare citizens to be able to work within the ‘global society’ that was now the Union. Indeed, she argued, it was also very important because it would help young people find their first job.

In summary, all the Members who contributed to the plenary debates between 2000 and 2003 acknowledged the importance which acquiring a knowledge of at least one language, other than one’s mother tongue, would have to the flow of labour among Member States. The benefits to both the individual worker and to the greater economy of the European Union were extolled, for the most part in a dispassionate manner, and no opposition to this view surfaced in the debates. Interestingly, the great majority of contributions – all in favour – came from the centre and right of the political spectrum. As is made clear from the opening to this chapter, not one Member of the political far left – from the Confederal Group of the European United Left / Nordic Green Left [GUE/NGL] – and only a very small number from PSE spoke specifically to this subject at length.

- ¹ Vasco Graça Moura [PPE-DE] (PT) 12 April 2000
- ² Refer to Part Two below where the stated views of Members of the European Parliament on the economic advantages of linguistic diversity are set out.
- ³ Doris Pack [PPE-DE] (DE): ‘... rarely has there been so much insight and common sense in evidence on all sides of this House...’ 12 April 2000
- ⁴ Geneviève Fraisse [GUE/NGL] (FR) 12 April 2000
- ⁵ Elisabeth Schroedter [Verts/ALE] (DE) 3 July 2000
- ⁶ Karin Junker [PSE] (DE): ‘Cultural and linguistic diversity are matchless assets...’ 5 July 2000
- ⁷ Ole Andreasen [ELDR] (DA) 5 July 2000
- ⁸ Viviane Reding: ‘... the Commission is, *as you know*, very concerned about respect and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity.’ 5 July 2000 [My emphasis]
- ⁹ Walter Veltroni [PSE] (IT) 5 September 2000
- ¹⁰ Alexandros Alavanos [GUE/NGL] (HE) 6 September 2000
- ¹¹ Gérard Caudron [PSE] (FR) 6 September 2000
- ¹² Ilda Figueiredo [GUE/NGL] (PT) 6 July 2000
- ¹³ Bruno Gollnisch [NI] (FR) 5 September 2002
- ¹⁴ Gerard Collins [UEN] (IR): ‘... we must not help build a two-tier Europe where larger Member States run the European Union at the expense of the smaller Member States.’ 3 October 2000
- ¹⁵ Yves Butel [EDD] (FR): ‘... a genuine Europe of differences, based on respect for peoples and for their diversity. This is what constitutes the real wealth of Europe.’ 3 October 2000
- ¹⁶ Elena Paciotti [PSE] (IT): ‘Made up of different peoples and nations which wish to retain their different traditions, languages and religions, the European Union’s identity is... based on... shared fundamental human rights. This is the model of European civilisation...’ 3 October 2000
- ¹⁷ Othmar Karas [PPE-DE] (OS) 27 October 2000
- ¹⁸ Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU) 14 November 2000
- ¹⁹ Neena Gill [PSE] (UK): ‘It should not be necessary to master the English language in order to find interesting content on the Internet.’ 13 December 2000
- ²⁰ Geneviève Fraisse [GUE/NGL] (FR): ‘Cultural and linguistic diversity is served by the e-content economic project, and I am pleased to know that we shall be able to support linguistic diversity thanks to digital content.’ 13 December 2000
- ²¹ Esko Seppänen [GUE/NGL] (SU) 13 December 2000
- ²² Ruth Hieronymi [PPE-DE] (DE) 13 December 2000
- ²³ Gérard Caudron [PSE] (FR): ‘I want to emphasise the importance of the objective of promoting multilingualism in digital content on the world networks, particularly for European languages.’ 13 December 2000
- ²⁴ Bastiaan Belder [EDD] (NL) 14 December 2000
- ²⁵ David Martin [PSE] (UK) 14 December 2000
- ²⁶ Luciano Caveri [ELDR] (IT): ‘... due to its advantages in economic and employment terms, and, of course, due to its cultural wealth and linguistic diversity – which are shown clearly in the concept of linguistic minorities and regional languages – over the monolingualism that characterises much of the “Web”.’ 14 December 2000
- ²⁷ Barbara O’Toole [PSE] (UK) 1 February 2001
- ²⁸ Ilda Figueiredo [GUE/NGL] (PT) 1 February 2001. But note her caveat in connection with another report, the Paasilinna report: ‘The Commission’s position... in some cases, it establishes regulations designed to safeguard the rights of users and of creators themselves and even fundamental freedoms such as the pluralism of information and cultural and linguistic diversity, which, it is acknowledged, may be endangered by this whole process.’ 1 March 2001
- ²⁹ Vasco Graça Moura [PPE-DE] (PT) 1 February 2001

- ³⁰ Luis Marinho [PSE] (PT): ‘... our languages will be of little use if, at the altar of technology, they become merely the remnant of the identity that gives any European uniqueness in the eyes of the world.’ 13 February 2001 Again, Geneviève Fraisse [GUE/NGL] (FR): ‘I was also struck by the emphasis placed on the extent to which the new technologies, which are so important today – we discussed that yesterday, in relation to copyright – promote cultural diversity through the question of languages. That is another point we in the Committee on Culture consider extremely important.’ 15 February 2001
- ³¹ Doris Pack [PPE-DE] (DE) 14 May 2001
- ³² Maria Marterns [PPE-DE] (NL) 14 May 2001
- ³³ Roy Perry [PPE-DE] (UK) 14 May 2001
- ³⁴ Guido Podestà [PPE-DE] (IT) 12 June 2001
- ³⁵ Lennart Särnedeus [PPE-DE] (SV) 3 July 2001
- ³⁶ Mario Monti 3 July 2001
- ³⁷ Annemie Nyets-Uytebroeck: ‘... I can assure you, therefore, that cultural diversity, and the desire for cultural diversity, will certainly be included as one of the basic principles of the European Union, and it is a principle to which we are all very much attached.’ 4 July 2001
- ³⁸ Neil Kinnock 13 February 2001
- ³⁹ Iaoannis Souladakis [PSE] (HE) 4 September 2001
- ⁴⁰ Giorgio Ruffolo [PSE] (IT) *rapporteur* on behalf of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport, on cultural cooperation in the European Union 4 September 2001
- ⁴¹ Felekna Uca [GUE/NGL] (DE) 5 September 2001
- ⁴² Gérard Caudron [PSE] (FR): ‘On the contrary, this involves emphasising cultural and linguistic diversity and the sharing of a common heritage.’ 5 September 2001
- ⁴³ Armonia Bordes, Chantal Cauquil and Arlette Laguiller – [GUE/NGL] (FR): ‘We claim that we are talking about culture when we are actually referring to markets, if not business! On the other hand, the [Ruffolo] report does not raise any of the most basic questions. Is everyone living within the European Union guaranteed access to culture? ... These questions do not interest the European authorities, which are too preoccupied with regulating competition in the cultural business world. We therefore voted against this report.’ 5 September 2001
- ⁴⁴ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 12 December 2001
- ⁴⁵ Poul Nielson 13 December 2001
- ⁴⁶ Pat Cox [ELDR] (IR) 15 January 2002
- ⁴⁷ Fodé Sylla [GUE/NGL] (FR) 15 January 2002
- ⁴⁸ Commissioner Viviane Reding: ‘... the European project is incompatible with a form of globalisation which would be liable to erode national, regional or local identities and threaten linguistic and cultural diversity.’ 10 March 2003
- ⁴⁹ Giorgos Papandreou, representative of the Greek Presidency of the Council: ‘That is what unites us. Different nations, different languages, even different traditions, but with a common will based on principles, based on these values.’ 20 March 2003
- ⁵⁰ Council of Ministers reply to a Question from James Fitzsimons [UEN] (IR) concerning education curricula 13 March 2003. The Council of Ministers reply is almost identical to the reply given on 4 October 2001 in answer to another Question: ‘... the Community shall contribute to the development of high quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States, and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems, and their cultural and linguistic diversity.’
- ⁵¹ For example, Jean-Charles Marchiani [UEN] (FR) 8 April 2003
- ⁵² For example, Boris Trajkovski *President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*: ‘The European Parliament embodies a vision of Europe that is shared today by millions of people, not only inside but also outside of the current European Union, including by the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia. It is vision of a continent of diversity, where different traditions,

cultures and languages meet on the basis of mutual respect and common interests.’ 8 April 2003

⁵³ Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT) 10 April 2003

⁵⁴ Viviane Reding 3 June 2003

⁵⁵ Ulpu Iivari [PSE] (SU), Vasco Graça Moura [PPE-DE] (PT) 20 October 2003; José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT) 21 October 2003

⁵⁶ Luckas Vander Taelen [Verts/ALE] a Dutch-speaking Belgian Member: ‘We are all convinced of the usefulness of this exercise, of course.’ 12 April 2000

⁵⁷ Carlo Fatuzzo [PPE-DE] (IT): ‘...every year should be a year of languages.’ 13 April 2000

⁵⁸ Gérard Caudron [PSE] (FR) His preceding comment is very typical of the sentiments expressed by MEPs in the plenary debates on this subject: ‘Boosting the learning of foreign languages will bring European citizens closer together by giving them the means to communicate, and thus get to know each other and forge the links to make the concept of European citizenship a reality.’ 13 April 2000

⁵⁹ Kathleen Van Brempt [PSE] a Dutch-speaking Belgian Member 13 April 2000

⁶⁰ Christopher Heaton-Harris [PPE-DE] (UK): ‘I, as a British Conservative, often find fault – and it is very easy to find fault – with many of the programmes organised and paid for by the European Commission and the European Union. However, I have a soft spot for Erasmus because it is very difficult to find fault with that particular programme. It seems to achieve some of the results it actually expects.’ 5 September 2000

⁶¹ Paul Rübig [PPE-DE] (OS) 8 September 2000

⁶² Christa Klass [PPE-DE] (DE) 8 September 2000

⁶³ Maria Martens [PPE-DE] (NL): ‘It is thanks to [Socrates, Youth for Europe] that young people can come into contact with the thinking, the language and the culture of other countries. This is why these programmes which promote student mobility are so crucially important. After all, the experiences which these people gather contribute to a broader understanding of European cultures, they enhance professional experience and the command of languages, encourage familiarity with the European patrimony and increase the chances of finding employment.’ 4 October 2000

⁶⁴ Raina Echerer [Verts/ALE] (OS): ‘A Europe of people like that would be my ideal.’ 8 September 2000

⁶⁵ Rosa Díez González [PSE] (ES) 21 September 2000

⁶⁶ Anna Karamanou [PSE] (HE) 21 September 2000

⁶⁷ Luciana Sbarbati [ELDR] (IT) 4 October 2000

⁶⁸ Othmar Karas [PPE-DE] (OS) 4 October 2000

⁶⁹ Gérard Caudron [PSE] (FR) 5 October 2000

⁷⁰ Pedro Aparicio Sánchez [PSE] (ES) 17 November 2000

⁷¹ Pervenche Berès [PSE] (FR) 14 March 2001

⁷² Concepció Ferrer [PPE-DE] (ES) 13 March 2001 Included in Reding’s reply was: ‘I would also like to reiterate that linguistic diversity is highlighted in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. This linguistic diversity has been put into practice in the Member States for the European Year of Languages.’

⁷³ Viviane Reding: ‘Those who are doing nothing about it are beginning to have a guilty conscience. That, at least, is a start. We must continue to nurture that guilty conscience.’ 14 May 2001

⁷⁴ Ole Andreasen [ELDR] (DA) 4 September 2001

⁷⁵ Pedro Aparicio Sánchez [PSE] (ES): ‘To those nationalists who, from within or from outside the Union, reject the future of the European Union because, according to them, we do not share a common identity, we must reply with the words of Levy Strauss, who said: “We do not need one, because we have something much stronger: a common destiny”.’ 4 September 2001

⁷⁶ Maria Sanders-ten Holte [ELDR] (NL): ‘After all, although we insist on a sound command of languages here in this House, the supply of adapted language versions would be another excellent way for the citizens of a Member State to get to know the culture of their European fellow citizens.’ 12 November 2001

⁷⁷ Viviane Reding: ‘I shall be attending the Education Council on 29 November, and on that occasion we will be discussing the best way to follow up the European Year of Languages, because it is not enough to have launched an action and for that action to have been received with great enthusiasm on the part of the public; this action also needs to be followed up.’ 13 November 2001

⁷⁸ Ioannis Marinou [PPE-DE] (HE) 13 November 2001

⁷⁹ Viviane Reding: ‘It must, however, be pointed out, Mr President, that the Commission cannot set school curricula. This is in the sphere of *subsidiarity* and, therefore, falls within the remit of the Ministers for Education. This is why I conveyed to the Education Ministers all the discussions that took place in all the institutional frameworks, of which there were many, in order to tell them: ‘Here you are, Europe’s citizens and their representatives want the linguistic element to become an important part of the education system’. On the basis of all the reports available, at the end of November, the Ministers will have to decide and adopt a resolution, and then I shall ensure that this resolution is followed up with deeds, in other words that these ministers will make sure that their national or regional education systems, depending on the country, will provide the greatest possible range of languages, and from as early an age as possible. I cannot, however, force a minister to put a particular language on his or her agenda. I can only encourage him or her to do so. Let me assure you that I am quite convinced that multilingualism represents Europe’s future, because it reflects cultural diversity, which is our true wealth. (*Applause*)’ 13 November 2001

⁸⁰ Anna Diamantopoulou 7 February 2002

⁸¹ Georges Berthu [NI] (FR): ‘Our real objective, which is what most of our fellow citizens want, is respect for nations and also for the lifestyle, culture and language to which they are rightfully attached.’ 27 February 2002

⁸² Kathleen Van Brempt [PSE] a Dutch-speaking Belgian Member 20 March 2003

⁸³ Eurig Wyn [Verts/ALE] (UK) 28 February 2002

⁸⁴ Raina Echerer [Verts/ALE] (OS): ‘... it is of immense importance to all of us and we know that it starts in the nursery.’ 28 February 2002

⁸⁵ Maria Sanders-ten-Holte [ELDR] (NL) 28 February 2002

⁸⁶ Giovanni Mussa [UEN] (IT) 28 February 2002

⁸⁷ Viviane Reding 28 February 2002 Written endorsement also in the Parliament of the aims of both the *Socrates* and the Youth for Europe programmes was forthcoming during the year, as for example, Ilda Figueiredo [GUE/NGL] (PT): ‘Equally positive is the... call for greater attention to be paid to... encouraging the learning of foreign languages...’ 10 October 2002.

⁸⁸ José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT) 17 December 2002

⁸⁹ Graham Watson [ELDR] (UK): ‘It is nonsensical political correctness to dismiss any requirement that immigrants should learn the language of their host country.’ But he did also say: ‘Moreover, proper support for integration must be provided and we must combat discrimination and racism wherever it is found. In this regard, I would pay tribute to the work of the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, and I commend to political parties the Charter of Political Parties for a non-racist society.’ 14 May 2002

⁹⁰ Sarah Ludford [ELDR] (UK) 4 February 2002

⁹¹ Eva Klamt [PPE-DE] (DE): ‘On the other hand, we share the view that the level of language knowledge... should not, under any circumstances, be considered a condition for obtaining resident status.’ Robert J.E. Evans [PSE] (UK): ‘... using an individual’s progress in language as a criterion as to whether to grant long-term status is discriminatory.’ Both 4 February 2002

⁹² Doris Pack [PPE-DE] (DE) 11 April 2002

- ⁹³ Maria Martens [PPE-DE] (NL): ‘... together with a knowledge of, and a feel for, the various countries, languages and cultures... I agree with the report that we in Europe must work towards a consistent and high level of education, which inevitably goes hand in hand with a command of languages...’ 11 April 2002
- ⁹⁴ Gary Titley [PSE] (UK) 11 April 2002
- ⁹⁵ Luciana Sbarbati [ELDR] (IT) 11 April 2002
- ⁹⁶ Theresa Zabell [PPE-DE] (ES) 11 April 2002
- ⁹⁷ Viviane Reding: ‘This [the European Year of Languages] has set things moving. I say this full of admiration for the speedy response of many Education ministers, who have undertaken reforms of their school systems to enable children to learn one or more foreign languages from an early age. I can tell you that at the Barcelona Summit the Heads of State and Government adopted our slogan of ‘mother tongue plus two’.’ 11 April 2002
- ⁹⁸ Christa Prets [PSE] (OS) 13 May 2002
- ⁹⁹ Viviane Reding 13 May 2002
- ¹⁰⁰ Jillian Evans [Verts/ALE] (UK) 16 May 2002
- ¹⁰¹ Ilda Figueiredo [GUE/NGL] (PT) 16 May 2002
- ¹⁰² Konstantinos Alyssandrakis [GUE/NGL] (HE) 10 June 2002
- ¹⁰³ Marielle De Sarnez [PPE-DE] (FR) 5 September 2002
- ¹⁰⁴ Carlos Coelho [PPE-DE] (PT) 4 September 2002
- ¹⁰⁵ Luciana Sbarbati [ELDR] (IT): ‘... living also and above all means communicating, for, nowadays, it is those who communicate who count in society. In order to communicate, a person needs both knowledge and the ability to communicate, which means being in possession of the tools of communication – languages. This is the area where we have to make progress. This is what we must concentrate on.’ 5 September 2002
- ¹⁰⁶ Geneviève Fraisse [GUE/NGL] (FR): ‘If you are interested in languages, theatre and the performing arts, what one also discovers is that, fundamentally, these areas make up our heritage.’ 21 October 2002
- ¹⁰⁷ Romano Prodi 9 October 2002
- ¹⁰⁸ Marielle De Sarnez [PPE-DE] (FR) 7 April 2003
- ¹⁰⁹ Viviane Reding 7 April 2003 It is, therefore, no surprise that she declared: ‘I cannot accept Amendment No 68 because it seeks to eliminate the promotion of linguistic competence and intercultural understanding, which is completely the opposite direction from that we wish to take.’
- ¹¹⁰ Maria Sanders-ten-Holte [ELDR] (NL) 7 April 2003
- ¹¹¹ Raina Echerer [Verts/ALE] (OS) 7 April 2003
- ¹¹² Geneviève Fraisse [GUE/NGL] (FR) 7 April 2003
- ¹¹³ Jean-Thomas Nordmann [ELDR] (FR): ‘This challenge consists of responding to the brain drain by attracting brains, without imitating formulas from outside Europe, while developing a specific objective: linguistic diversity.’ 7 April 2003
- ¹¹⁴ Eurig Wyn [Verts/ALE] (UK): ‘There is no point in talking about a Europe of diversity unless we provide people with the proper skills in languages that will enhance that goal.’ 7 April 2003
- ¹¹⁵ Doris Pack [PPE-DE] (DE) 7 April 2003
- ¹¹⁶ Christa Prets [PSE] (OS): ‘I do indeed think that linguistic diversity has a part to play during courses of study... but [language courses] should not be considered admission criteria for the bursary.’ 7 April 2003
- ¹¹⁷ Ulpu Iivari [PSE] (SU): ‘Let us for example consider the case of a degree course in biotechnology under the Masters programme, to be undertaken in partnership with higher education institutions in Finland, Latvia and Estonia. I am sure a requirement to study the language of these countries would do little to enhance the attractiveness of the programme in the minds of young people interested in biotechnology. This is not a problem that just

concerns the northern fringe of Europe, but just as much Portugal and Greece, for example.’ 7 April 2003

¹¹⁸ Regina Bastos [PPE-DE] (PT) 8 April 2003

¹¹⁹ Theresa Zabeł [PPE-DE] (ES) 7 April 2003

¹²⁰ Ulpu Iivari [PSE] (SU) 7 April 2003

¹²¹ Armonia Bordes [GUE/NGL] (FR), Chantal Cauquil [GUE/NGL] (FR) and Arlette Laguiller [GUE/NGL] (FR) 8 April 2003

¹²² Seán Ó Neachtain [UEN] (IR) 13 February 2003

¹²³ Olga Zhiren [PSE] a French-speaking Belgian MEP 3 June 2003

¹²⁴ Mathieu Grosch [PPE-DE] a German-speaking Belgian Member 4 September 2003

¹²⁵ Marielle De Sarnez [PPE-DE] (FR) *rapporteur* The idea behind the change in name of the programme was to make ‘it easier for people to identify it with the European Union’. 20 October 2003

¹²⁶ Maria Sanders-ten-Holte [ELDR] (NL): ‘It is important in Europe to offer a sound alternative to the American universities, to which the majority of our European students go at present... it is of major importance for students to learn foreign languages, at least two... It also promotes the understanding of other cultures.’ 20 October 2003

¹²⁷ Doris Pack [PPE-DE] (DE) 20 October 2003

¹²⁸ Michel Rocard [PSE] (FR) 20 October 2003

¹²⁹ Brigitte Wenzel-Perillo [PPE-DE] (DE) 20 October 2003

¹³⁰ Thomas Mann [PPE-DE] (DE) 20 October 2003

¹³¹ Myrsini Zorba [PSE] (HE): ‘It is very important that Europe has the courage today to open up to competition, to languages and to cross-cultural understanding... That means we are promoting European values.’ 20 October 2003

¹³² Regina Bastos [PPE-DE] (PT): ‘One of the principal objectives of this programme is to promote linguistic diversity’ and in another communication on the same day: ‘The overall aim is to encourage the integration of the new information and communication technologies into European education and training systems, thereby enabling: - greater intercultural dialogue; - awareness of languages...’ 21 October 2003

Danielle Daras [PSE] (FR): ‘The linguistic stakes cannot be ignored. It is a question of emphasising both the importance of the EU’s linguistic diversity and the need for third country students to know at least two EU languages.’ 21 October 2003

¹³³ Ole Andreasen [ELDR] (DA): ‘... people need good language skills in order to be able to find employment in EU countries other than their own.’ 12 April 2000

¹³⁴ Ioannis Marinou [PPE-DE] (HE) 12 April 2000

¹³⁵ Christa Kläss [PPE-DE] (DE): ‘Knowledge of languages should not just be viewed as an aspect of interpersonal relations, for it has quite considerable economic potential, particularly in the context of the internal market and globalisation... If I want to gain access to a particular market then I have to speak and understand the language of the market participants.’ 12 April 2000

¹³⁶ François Zimeray [PSE] (FR): ‘Haute-Normandie has one of the youngest populations in France, but also one of the highest levels of youth unemployment. Speaking another European language can clearly be a key to success for those young people.’ 13 April 2000

¹³⁷ Charles Tannock [PPE-DE] (UK): ‘... anti-discrimination provisions are ludicrously wide-ranging and open to abuse. These rights open the door for demands for homosexual marriage and adoption, and language discrimination clauses might prohibit the refusal to employ EU doctors in the United Kingdom who do not speak English.’ 14 November 2000

¹³⁸ Raina Echerer [Verts/ALE] (OS): ‘The much-vaunted cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe is indeed a frequent barrier, especially in the context of the single market. But if we make a virtue out of necessity and change the minuses into plus signs, if we consider our languages as bridges rather than obstacles, if we recognise and exploit the benefits they offer,

they can form the foundations of a European market and lend us a certain independence.’ 13 December 2000

¹³⁹ Willy De Clerq [PPE-DE] (BE): ‘In order to promote integration and the opportunities for students in the labour market, in my view knowledge of three languages should be regarded as a minimum...only 45%, of citizens of the European Union can conduct a conversation in any but their native language.’ 14 May 2001

¹⁴⁰ Barbara O'Toole [PSE] (UK): ‘I would argue that for universal access to mobility we need to have universal access to language teaching and learning.’ 14 May 2001

¹⁴¹ Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou [PPE-DE] (HE): ‘The mobility of labour in Europe is extremely sluggish owing to... language problems and cultural differences.’ 4 October 2001

¹⁴² Rijk van Dam [EDD] (NL) 23 October 2001

¹⁴³ Carlo Fatuzzo [PPE-DE] (IT) 13 December 2001

¹⁴⁴ Maria Martens [PPE-DE] (NL): ‘With a growing, open internal market and with a society which is becoming ever more multicultural, the importance of a knowledge of languages is growing.’ 5 February 2002

¹⁴⁵ Thomas Mann [PPE-DE] (DE): ‘It is only through comprehensive knowledge, including languages, that they will have unimpeded access to the labour markets of Europe, which will be open to them.’ 27 February 2002

¹⁴⁶ Marielle De Sarnez [PPE-DE] (FR): ‘... we must also encourage the promotion of language learning. Language learning is an undisputed factor of mobility and this is why it would be desirable for the Member States to systematically establish the teaching of foreign languages in the form of modules in all institutions of higher education.’ 11 April 2002

¹⁴⁷ Roy Perry [PPE-DE] (UK): ‘For the single market to flourish and for Europe to flourish we need an educated and mobile workforce, confident about crossing national boundaries... We must send a message to the British Government that they should reverse their appalling decision of the last few weeks to allow secondary students in Britain not to learn any foreign language at all.’ 28 February 2002

¹⁴⁸ Eurig Wyn [Verts/ALE] (UK) 5 September 2002

¹⁴⁹ Ulpu Iivari [PSE] (SU): ‘The programmes offer young people in the applicant countries the chance to boost their human capital with language skills and cultural know-how.’ 12 June 2002

¹⁵⁰ Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou [PPE-DE] (HE) 9 October 2002

¹⁵¹ Marielle De Sarnez [PPE-DE] (FR): ‘A strategy to promote employment must first of all include efforts to promote the mobility of students and the continued training of workers, not to mention efforts to facilitate the creation of enterprises outside national borders.’ 10 October 2002

¹⁵² Liam Hyland [UEN] (IR) 7 April 2003

¹⁵³ Theresa Zabell [PPE-DE] (ES) 7 April 2003

CHAPTER FOUR: WALKING THE WALK IN AND AROUND PARLIAMENT

‘The European Community is not a federal union, but more like some kind of confederation, in which different cultures and national traditions are very important’ – Manuel Medina Ortega (ES)

‘It is up to us to construct this dialectic of European unity and its linguistic diversity’ – Bernard Poignant (FR)

‘If I, as a Swede, have the right to speak Swedish and a Portuguese Member has the right to speak Portuguese, then a Hungarian Member must be allowed to speak Hungarian and a Lithuanian to speak Lithuanian – Per Stenmarck (SV)

During the years from 2000 to 2003, there were speeches delivered during the plenary debates in support of and there were speeches delivered in opposition to the actual or potential use of only one language as the preferred method of communication, whether that communication be in and around Parliament or by the Commission or by the institutions of the European Union.

Prominent contributors to the plenary debates on these themes during the fifth parliamentary term of the European Parliament included:

Table 4.1 Major contributors to the debates on for and against the use of one language as the preferred method of communication

MEMBER	POLITICAL GROUP	MEMBER STATE	POLITICAL PARTY
Alavanos, Alexandros	GUE/NGL	HE	Synaspismos tis Aristeras kai tis Proodou
Berthu, Georges	UEN	FR	Mouvement pour la France
Böge, Reimer	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands
Bonde, Jens-Peter	EDD	DA	JuniBevægelsen - Mod Unionen
Caudron, Gérard	GUE/NGL	FR	Socialiste Indépendant
Coûteaux, Paul Marie	EDD	FR	Mouvement pour la France - Rassemblement pour l'Indépendance et la Souveraineté de la France
Dehousse, Jean-Maurice	PSE	BE	Parti socialiste
Dover, Den	PPE-DE	UK	Conservative and Unionist Party
Ford, Glyn	PSE	UK	Labour and the Gibraltar Socialist Labour Party
Gill, Neena	PSE	UK	Labour Party
Kauppi, Piia-Noora	PPE-DE	SU	Kansallinen Kokoomus
Korakas, Efstratios	GUE/NGL	HE	Kommounistiko Komma Elladas
MacCormick, Neil	Verts/ALE	UK	Scottish National Party
Maes, Nelly	Verts/ALE	BE	België Spirit
Manders, Toine	ELDR	NL	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
Mayol i Raynal, Miquel	Verts/ALE	ES	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya
Medina Ortega, Manuel	PSE	ES	Partido Socialista Obrero Español
Meijer, Erik	GUE/NGL	NL	Socialistische Partij
Montfort, Elizabeth	UEN	FR	Union pour un Mouvement Populaire
Muscardini, Cristiana	UEN	IT	Alleanza nazionale
Paasilina, Reino	PSE	SU	Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue/Finlands Socialdemokratiska Parti
Podestà, Guido	PPE-DE	IT	Forza Italia
Rebeiro e Castro, José	UEN	PT	Partido Popular
Seppänen, Esko	GUE/NGL	SU	Vasemmistoliitto
Staes, Bart	Verts/ALE	BE	Groen
Stenmarck, Per	PPE-DE	SV	Moderata samlingspartiet
Thors, Astrid	ELDR	SU	Svenska folkpartiet
Thyssen, Marianne	PPE-DE	BE	Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams - Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie
Vanhecke, Frank	NI	BE	Vlaams Belang
Virrankoski, Kyösti	ELDR	SU	Suomen Keskusta
Wuermeling, Joachim	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern e.V.

In July 2000, Glyn Ford – ironically, it must be said, representing the United Kingdom – complained¹ that nobody in the French presidency could read any of the European languages other than French. This prompted a barely audible, yet nevertheless sharp, retort from Pierre Moscovici, a representative of the French Presidency of the Council, that not everyone in the Presidency was uneducated and illiterate, and Moscovici then followed this up with a reference to the ‘so-called rules of transmission’.

This brief exchange raises the issue as to whether multiple languages or rather just one language should be used during parliamentary proceedings or in communication between the Commission and Parliament. This Chapter attempts to ascertain, *inter alia*, what support, if any, monolingualism, as opposed to multilingualism, received during the parliamentary debates between 2000 and 20003.

According to speakers in the plenary debates, there has been a general acceptance that English should be the language of communication in major international transport services such as shipping and aviation.² However, when the question of what common language, if any, might be used in rail transport was raised in early February 2001, Theodorus Bouwman³ declared that, if English were to be the language of rail, then he would immediately propose that from that moment on English be the only language of the Parliament. His rationale was that such a decision would make all communication ‘very easy’. But his vocal support for monolingualism was certainly not universally shared. Less than a month later, Alexandros Alavanos⁴ complained that, while the Parliament was operating multilingually, the Commission seemed to be operating on an English only basis. In fact, a clash took place in Parliament later that year between Gianfranco Dell’Alba⁵ and Commissioner Kinnock⁶ with the former asserting that, as a Member, he did not want to speak only English. Dell’Alba went on to express his apprehension at any domination by the English language and his fear that the culture surrounding the English language would consequently have excessive influence. This particular comment must have somehow struck a raw nerve with Kinnock because he rounded on the Italian from the Group of Independent Members, accusing him of making a ‘cheap point’ about language hegemony, which, according to Kinnock, had no foundation in fact.

It was a sensitive topic, obviously, in the Year of Languages! Dell’Alba saw fit to “withdraw and apologise”, saying that his comments had been intended to be jocular! However, Members were certainly suspicious of any occasions when one of the official languages was not made available within Parliament’s surrounds – as is illustrated by the response of Reino Paasilinna⁷ to the fact that Finnish language programmes had been removed from Parliament’s television network ‘while some Member States can get three or four channels’. The President of the Parliament was quick to reassure the Member that the removal of the Finnish language programmes was only a technical glitch!

Nevertheless, allusions continued to be made to a *lingua franca* during the fifth parliamentary term. For example, in January 2002, Giorgis Katiforis⁸ announced during one debate that he was using the ‘lingua franca of our epoch - English’ rather than his own national language, Greek. Three weeks later Alexandros Alavanos⁹ chose to ask a question of Commissioner Diamantapoulou in English because he said it was well known that the Commissioner was ‘a supporter of English as our official language’. The fact that so many different languages were spoken in the debating chamber was even blamed as one of the principal reasons for the Chamber being ‘all but empty, in spite of the fact that interesting issues are being debated’. ¹⁰ The claim made was that long written papers were being read out aloud instead of there being a vigorous debate ‘with quick responses and opposition’.

This sort of claim was by no means new in the fifth parliamentary term. For example, almost eighteen months earlier, unfavourable comparisons were drawn between the debates in the European Parliament which were characterised as a ‘series of monologues’ and debates in the national parliaments of Member States which were characterised by ‘vivacity, energy and pertinence’ – ‘the members of parliament in the Palais Bourbon, Westminster, the Cortes are able to compare ideas because they are expressed within the same cultural framework and in the same language’. ¹¹ Yet, for the German centrist, Michael Gahler,¹² the fact that all parliamentarians could speak, listen to and read their mother tongue within the Chamber was a matter of pride. Conversely, the fact that all the signs, notices and announcements on screens in Parliament were in one language only was a cause for chagrin, as far as Gahler was concerned. He maintained that this matter was, in reality, actually a matter of ‘our

identity, about whether we feel at home here, and it is also about Parliament's image'. Members applauded when Gahler asked the President of the Parliament to instruct parliamentary services to put forward proposals on how multilingualism could be extended to signs and notices in the Parliament building.

Paul Marie Coûteaux, a Frenchman from the Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities [EDD], made a significant contribution to the parliamentary discussion of this issue.¹³ On the very day when parliamentarians welcomed their counterparts from the ten candidate countries that were to accede in 2004, Coûteaux reminded the visitors, who were from Central and Eastern Europe, that in February the Commission had asked the candidate countries to communicate in English during the negotiation process. He then proceeded to warn the visitors:

‘This linguistic problem is a sign. The omnipresence of English points clearly to the trap: it is so very, very unfortunate, my friends from the countries of the East, that you are leaving one empire only to join another.’

Earlier in his same speech to the assembly, Coûteaux had drawn attention to Rule 117, which provides for the equal treatment of the Union's languages. His complaint related to the situation where it was not possible for all official languages to be used in any instance. In such a situation, the convention was that the language of the country where the Parliament was sitting would be used. In this particular case, Coûteaux was referring to the display screens installed for the benefit of the new arrivals in the Strasbourg Chamber (located in France), which had only the English language on them, rather than French. He claimed that this development upset many parliamentarians of all nationalities:

‘... who do not want English to become the sole language of Europe. I also noted down, only last night, ladies and gentlemen, a comment made by a fellow Member from Spain which was that the new members will think that they are joining not the European Union, but the Federation of the United States of America.’

Coûteaux expressed this fear, he said, not only on behalf of nine French Members of EDD, ‘but also on behalf of many fellow Members’. Then, in a series of rhetorical questions, he referred to countries acceding to the European Union as having to relinquish part of their ‘European soul’. In fact, according to him, these countries had

to leave Europe to join an Atlantic universe ‘where differences, cultures, languages and, ultimately, the European heritage – with which they, like us, have been endowed – will be wiped out’. Coûteaux added that the views he had expressed represented the opinions of the majority of the French people – ‘who are opposed to this dreadful and virtually totalitarian idea of so-called European integration’. The President of the Parliament assured Coûteaux that his concerns regarding the use of language on the display signs would be examined by Parliament’s services.

This was not the first allusion Coûteaux made to globalisation and perceived Anglo-American domination during the plenary debates in 2002. Over four months earlier,¹⁴ while commenting on an item that had asked the representative of the Danish Presidency of the Council to study the issue of the use of languages, Coûteaux was adamant that the only way to improve the existing situation was to allow Members to work in their own language. His assertion was that, despite the Rules of Procedure, there was an increasing trend for Members to have to vote on texts available in English only. He sarcastically asked whether the time was approaching when potential Members of the European Parliament would first have to pass an English language test. The philosophy behind his argument was that the European Parliament was not, and should never be, an “international” organisation in itself. It was not acceptable to Coûteaux, therefore, for there to be only one or two working languages:

‘Nor is it acceptable to have to choose a pivot language, which would naturally be English, or rather, American English [Otherwise] we shall plainly see the true face of the European Union, as an outpost of the empire of the United States, and its true purpose of grinding down the European nations until they are nothing more than casualties of US world domination.’

Yet again, in March 2003, Coûteaux, during a passionate attack on the United States and ‘its Anglo-Saxon flunkies’, claimed that the United States had used the American English language as one of three weapons in its totalitarian ambitions.¹⁵

Similar sentiments were expressed, although couched more gently, by another French Member, Margie Sudre¹⁶, who stated that any policy designed to promote linguistic diversity would be encouraged by the Group of the European People’s Party and European Democrats [PPE-DE] because Europe must not be reduced to just one

language. Marco Cappato¹⁷ feared for the survival of linguistic diversity and asserted that the solution lay in the ‘difficult and uncomfortable word: Esperanto’. In the same debate there was also another call¹⁸ for ‘objective consideration’ to be given to Esperanto, this time on the “conspiratorial” grounds that ‘there is a double game being played by those who are arguing for an increase in the number of languages, with the actual aim of better establishing the monopoly of English’.

The principle that all the official languages of the European Union were equal came very much to the fore in 2002 in the plenary debate surrounding the Community patent. The matter of the Commission communication on the proposal for a regulation on a Community patent had been raised in the Parliament in 2000. At that time, Parliament heard pleasure expressed that the Commission had limited the number of languages that could be used for the Community patent in order ‘to reduce the costs and speed up the process’.¹⁹ A plea, in the interests of competitiveness, was made to fellow parliamentarians on the same day by a German MEP, Joachim Wuermeling, not to raise issues of principle on language matters.²⁰ One Member,²¹ while conceding that he was ‘not fanatical about languages’, queried why three languages had been arrived at rather than five as was the case with the Community Trademark Office. Commissioner Bolkestein replied that the cost of a three-language translation amounted to about ten per cent of the cost of translation into all [eleven] official languages.²² This very contentious language issue, described by Wuermeling in 2000 as ‘the unending Community patent saga’, did not, in fact, have the ‘happy ending’ the German MEP had hoped for then.

The Commission was asked²³ in 2001 what measures were proposed to reduce the legal uncertainty ‘imposed on those 150 million [European Union] citizens whose native language’ is not French, English or German. The questioner appeared unconvinced that those three languages, the translation into any one of which would render a patent valid, was a matter determined by a desire on the part of the Commission to reduce costs. The Commission’s response was predictable, in light of its stated position in 2000, namely that a pragmatic decision had been taken to balance the need to keep costs under control with the need to provide access to patent information. There was continuing debate in the Parliament around this “solution”.

The subject was broached three months later in another Question²⁴ which really amounted to an assertion by the Member concerned that the fundamental principle that anybody should be able to address any of the institutions ‘in any of the [eleven] official languages’ should be adhered to, with a consequence that applications for a patent should be able to be submitted in any of the official languages. The reply by a representative of the Belgian Presidency of the Council²⁵ effectively amounted to a guarantee that the matter was still under consideration while an appropriate balance was being sought between the principle of non-discrimination of languages and the desirability to curb the costs of translation. Parliament was also assured that further discussions on the subject were encouraged. The Belgian Member who had asked the Question conceded that, to his regret, only a minority of Member States – and he named Portugal, Spain, Greece, Finland, and Italy as being among them – were strongly opposed to the exclusive use of French, English and German in the patent language regime. His hope was that the conclusions – the key elements – of a patent would be made available in all the official languages and ‘so bring Europe a little closer to the citizen’.²⁶

In 2002 there was a proposal before the European Parliament that linguistic arrangements for patents incorporate the use of five languages, the so called *Alicante* arrangements. Many Members’ feelings on the matter were encapsulated in a speech by the Dutch speaking Belgian Member, Marianne Thyssen, from the PPE-DE Group, showing how important Members regarded the use of their own languages ‘to the fullest extent’. Thyssen reminded the Parliament that the right of citizens to use their own official language when communicating either with a European Union institution or before legal bodies dated back to 1958.²⁷ However, she argued that this right, enshrined in the Amsterdam Treaty, was constantly being undermined, and so she exhorted Members:

‘... to vote consciously tomorrow, to send out a signal to the Council and the Commission to very carefully reconsider the articles concerning the language regime. We must really prevent a new clause from being added to the list of incidents of unjustifiable discrimination against languages when the regulation on the Community Patent enters into force.’²⁸

On the other hand, her French colleague, Janelly Fourtou, was happy enough with the use of the three working languages regime of the European Patent Office since that

regime guaranteed ‘the threshold of international competitiveness’²⁹ at the same time as meeting ‘our linguistic needs’. “Whose linguistic needs?” one might well ask. Those of the French?

It was the Spanish *rapporteur* Ana Palacio Vallelersundi who had opened the 9 April 2002 debate on the Community patent. She indicated that the Commission’s intention had been to have three procedural languages for the patent – English, French and German. However, Palacio admitted that, ‘with reality in mind’, she herself had proposed the use of one language only – English. Her reasoning was that English was much more than just the language of one Member State; it was, undoubtedly, ‘the *lingua franca* of research’. Palacio did concede that the European Parliament clearly favoured a policy of cultural and linguistic diversity. Therefore, despite the Parliament having only a consultative role in this matter, a compromise was reached to have the five procedural languages for the patent. Another from Palacio’s PPE-DE Group also claimed that it would have been preferable to use just English because that is what European industry wanted for reasons of economy. The solution finally arrived at, he acknowledged, was ‘perhaps not the best solution’ but ‘the only solution possible’³⁰ in the circumstances.

The Group of the Party of European Socialists [PSE] supported this compromise to have five procedural languages for the patent. The spokesperson, Manuel Medina Ortega, was clearly pleased that his own language, Spanish, was to be one of the five, because ‘for a country like Spain and for the 500 million people who speak Spanish worldwide, submission to a language which is not their own is going to cause very serious problems when carrying out research’.³¹ His thesis was that the European Community was not so much of a federal union but rather some kind of confederation in which different cultures and national traditions were regarded as very important. He had earlier said that linguistic matters were matters ‘of some importance to the European Union’. However, Greek Member Ioannis Koukiadis – also from the PSE Group – went further, arguing that ‘it would be helpful if at least all the claims in a European patent were translated into every language’ because this would ‘reduce the cost of granting a patent considerably, compared with the cost of a European patent applicable in fifteen countries’.³²

Support for the language compromise was not universal by any means. The Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party [ELDR] preferred the Palacio ‘with reality in mind’ approach rather than a decision based on ‘political sentiment’, according to spokesperson Toine Manders. He expressed his Group’s fear that the price of a patent would be raised considerably, with serious consequences for the European economy:

‘The linguistic costs will push up the price of the patent disproportionately high, which will adversely affect the competitiveness of businesses within this European market compared to businesses in other major markets, such as the United States and Japan.’³³

Well, that was the “Group view”, but a dissenting opinion was expressed by a Finn who wanted to ‘take the liberty’ of putting forward what she regarded as a simple system whereby patent proposals could be submitted in English or another of the Community languages and then ‘summaries of the applications would be translated into all the Community languages’.³⁴

The Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left [GUE/NGL] argued, through spokesperson Ilda Figueiredo,³⁵ that any arrangement to have the five procedural languages for the patent regime would constitute discrimination and set a dangerous precedent for the future use of the ‘main languages’ only. Such an arrangement was said to be a threat ‘to all the official languages’. The following day, another Member belonging to the GUE/NGL Group referred to English, French, German, Spanish and Italian as being in ‘a privileged position compared to other official languages of the current and future [European Union] Member States’.³⁶

For its part, the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance [Verts/ALE] wanted people to be able to put forward a patent claim in their own language and for that claim to be then translated into all the official languages of the European Union, with the costs borne by the European Union. The rationale expressed for this standpoint by Neil MacCormick is significant:

‘Preserving the principle of linguistic equality is an important public good of the European Union.’³⁷

The Member's turn of phrase is interesting in itself. Did he mean to say that the preservation of linguistic diversity was in the public interest, that it was *pro bono publico*? Alternatively, did he use the words "public good" in the specific sense in which they are used in economics? In other words, was he implying that linguistic diversity needed to be financed and driven by the European Commission rather than relying on private individuals or even individual Member States to "supply" something so desirable to the citizens?

The Verts/ALE Group were emphatic that the 'fundamental equality of all languages be retained'. Nelly Maes, on their behalf, declared linguistic equality to be one of their priorities, and the selection of five languages only was not acceptable to them. They saw such a selection as no 'honourable compromise' because 'discrimination on linguistic grounds would contravene Community law and the Charter of the Fundamental Rights':

'We would request Parliament, the Council and the Commission to endorse our amendments which allow everyone who submits a patent application to do so in their own language and to receive a reply in their own language, with translations into the other official languages of the Community.'³⁸

One of Parliament's non-attached Members reinforced this Verts/ALE position. During a very impassioned speech in the Chamber, in which Frank Vanhecke referred to his own country as Flanders and alluded darkly to an 'alienated occupying force',³⁹ the Dutch speaking Belgian representative also claimed that the compromise proposed drew a distinction once more between what he called first rate and second rate languages within the European Union:

'Let there be no doubt about this: this is unacceptable to us in Flanders. All [European Union] working languages should be treated equally, certainly including Dutch, my language, which is spoken by more than 21 million Europeans. And I am quite aware that this will, of course, entail a considerable additional cost. We should accept this as the price we have to pay if we want to retain this diversity which makes up the richness of our continent. I have in fact noticed quite specifically that the Member States of these so-called 'major' languages would also be prepared to get the European Union to carry this considerable cost if their language were likely to be pushed aside.'⁴⁰

The last word in the debate of 9 April 2002 on languages and patents went to Commissioner Bolkestein who rejected any moves to increase or reduce the number of languages used from the existing three, a regime which he reiterated ‘functions well’. The overwhelming consideration in coming to a decision, according to Bolkestein, was “affordability” for inventors and industry; and it was not an appropriate use of Community budget funds to finance translations.

The following day, some Members availed themselves of the opportunity to explain why they had voted the way they did on the proposed amendments to the Community patent language regime. The comments from PSE Group Members indicated that any scheme that would increase the costs of patent applications did not find favour with them. More significantly, one Member, Jean-Maurice Dehousse, grimly warned other parliamentarians that ‘even more painful decisions’⁴¹ regarding linguistic diversity would have to be made by the Parliament in the future. His view was that an acceptable balance had to be found among the three competing elements of efficiency, lowest economic cost and linguistic diversity. Dehousse expressed his satisfaction that the Parliament accepted that the linguistic diversity element could not be ‘extended *ad infinitum*’. Six MEPs, who described themselves as “Swedish Social Democrats”, went even further with their proposal to keep down the costs of patent applications. They advocated a ‘solution in terms of just one or two languages’.⁴²

Toine Manders, on behalf of the ELDR Group, repeated his earlier assertion that discussion of the language regime for patents had resulted in important ‘practical arguments’, such as affordability, becoming subordinated to ‘political sentiment’. Well, that is how he viewed the arguments of some parliamentarians.⁴³ It was his contention that to require more and more languages to be used would lead to patents becoming too expensive for European industry, when patents actually existed to protect that very industry. These ‘practical arguments’ had determined for his Group why they favoured a limited language regime and could not support the five language *Alicante* model.

One Member from the PPE-DE Group condemned what he referred to as the ‘excessive sensitivity’ on the language issue and called for this issue to be radically ‘tackled’ before the expected enlargement in membership in 2004. Failure to confront

the issue decisively would mean the situation would likely become untenable ‘when there are 40 million Polish speakers who also want their language to be given the same priority as, say, Italian or Spanish’.⁴⁴ Such an attitude certainly did not find any appeal with two Members, in particular, from the Verts/ALE Group – one Portuguese, the other Spanish Catalan. The former⁴⁵ adamantly maintained that all the official languages of the European Union had a ‘right’ to be used in all circumstances and that the ‘universal dimension’ of a language such as Portuguese should be taken into account anyway. He suspected that this ‘right’, as he expressed it, would be under threat when the number of Member States doubled and there might be pressure for it to be ‘renounced’. The Spanish Catalan MEP alleged that the principle of linguistic diversity was effectively being paid lip service only in the institutions of the European Union and the Commission’s attitude to the Community patent language regime was clear evidence of what he termed ‘linguistic discrimination’:

‘Respect for cultural and linguistic diversity is now one of the fundamental principles of Community law... This principle presupposes the equality in law of all languages.’⁴⁶

Emphasising his “Catalanness”, the same Member declared that he could in no way accept that his language of Catalan did not enjoy the same rights as enjoyed by the “official” languages of the European Union.

Early in 2000, it was noted during the plenary debates that the European Parliament was the only such institution in the world which operated in so many languages and that this linguistic diversity was worthy of being nurtured.⁴⁷ Indeed, the assertion was made then that a multilingual environment should not be seen merely in terms of cost because such an environment was also the ‘most effective practical instrument of peace’.⁴⁸ Similar sentiments are not uncommon in the contemporary academic literature, as described in Chapter Two “Support for language ecology policies” above.

The “democratic deficit” so frequently referred to in the writings of academics like Sue Wright [Refer to Chapter Two above] resonated with Joaquim Picarreta who called on all messages to be made available in every citizen’s own language otherwise information campaigns were at risk of being ineffective.⁴⁹ This viewpoint gained

support on the same day from fellow compatriot, José Rebeiro e Castro, who drew Members' attention to a report claiming the Commission was not setting an example for respecting linguistic diversity on many websites. Rebeiro e Castro certainly did not hold back in his criticism of current European Union information and communication policies.⁵⁰ As far as he was concerned, it was obvious that a citizen could not take advantage of European citizenship unless there was clear information available on how the institutions of the Community worked.

However, this was not a new complaint. For example, almost a year earlier, Arlene McCarthy⁵¹ had complained that a series of items she had requested from the Commission had been sent to her but 'they are all in different languages. I cannot read all of them; and if there is to be transparency on these issues they need to be available publicly on the web and in languages that people can understand'. What is more, there was a push for this information to be made available not just in the official languages of the European Union but also in the 'official languages of certain parts of the territory of Member States'.⁵² With reference to her own country, Concepció Ferrer wrote:

'This is the case of Catalonia. Languages such as Catalan are part of the identity of peoples who make up the European Union. Their commitment to the European cause and their sense of full European citizenship need to be rooted in that identity.'

Near the start of the parliamentary term, a demand had even been made that documents *a propos* the anticipated accession of Cyprus be translated into Turkish, the second official language of that country.⁵³ And, in 2001, Carlo Fatuzzo made a plea for the Italian version of documents to contain the Italian translation of all terms appearing in the documents.⁵⁴

The underlying sentiments expressed here were not without support in the Commission – as is demonstrated by Commissioner Michel Barnier's regret that because of budgetary technical and staffing resource reasons, publicity materials had been made available on one occasion in three languages only. Significantly, he added at the time:

‘We shall obviously be making a special effort for the European Year of Languages, which we are preparing at the moment, to respect the principle of linguistic pluralism as much as possible.’⁵⁵

In the middle of 2000, French President Jacques Chirac addressed the European Parliament in his capacity as President-in-Office of the Council. He called on all Member States to defend each European nation’s right ‘to retain its own culture, identity and language’.⁵⁶ Essentially, President Chirac’s argument was that unity in Europe was the only way that culture, identity and language could be properly defended in the face of what he referred to as a ‘multipolar’ world. The Spanish Royal Academy dictionary definition of “nation” as “a group of people of the same origin who speak the same language, have a shared tradition, a shared territory and an awareness of the same destiny” was to be quoted in a later debate that same year. On that particular occasion the definition was to be used in a context where the Parliament was being asked to respect the nationalists in the House who were moderate, peaceful and democratic.⁵⁷

Opportunities arose in the Parliament during 2000 for Members to put the case for the retention and preservation of national languages by means of television, film and radio. The words used by one speaker⁵⁸ – ‘a person’s native country in Europe in the future will be that person’s native language’ – recalls memories of the very influential eighteenth century *Philosophen* led by Johann von Herder whose dictum was that a person’s true homeland was that person’s language. [Refer to Chapter One above] On the same day in Parliament, a warning was delivered about the possible adverse impact of competition in the media on languages.⁵⁹ Indeed, there was some obvious apprehension that national identities (and, therefore, national languages) were threatened by too much emphasis being given to produce programmes on regional languages and on what was labelled “ethnic minorities”.

This apprehension was given expression in writing by one Member from the Union for Europe of the Nations Group [UEN]⁶⁰ who had, a fortnight earlier, been particularly scathing of a joint resolution on the Nice European Council. The very right to nationhood itself was under threat and debates in the Parliament had descended to a ‘series of monologues’ rather than the ‘real exchanges’⁶¹ essential for a living democracy. This fear for the continued survival of national languages was

similar to that which another French Member from the same Group had expressed in writing a month earlier about attempts to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of language.⁶² These proposals to ban linguistic discrimination amounted, in effect, to an attempt by the European Union to override a core provision in the French Constitution that the language of France is French, he maintained.

A plea was made in January 2001 for Members to speak in their respective languages when addressing the Parliament.⁶³ On that particular occasion, there was applause for the President of the Parliament's response that, according to the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Union is a union of free countries, and so everyone is free to speak in whatever language he or she chooses. But politicians from the UEN Group continued to vent their opposition to "superstructures" which would have the effect of diminishing the importance of a citizen's national language.⁶⁴ There was even some support forthcoming for this view from one Greek Member of the GUE/NGL Group who vigorously attacked a White Paper for its use of slogans like "European added value".⁶⁵ These slogans were, according to him, effectively designed to serve the interests of a globalised 'capitalist market'.

The question of languages and the budget was increasingly becoming the subject of comment, with one Member telling his fellow MEPs that 'we can no longer put off the language issue but must be completely serious about getting to grips with it'.⁶⁶ A request that Parliament be fully involved in the debate as to which languages and what rules for interpretation would be adopted following the accession of the ten new Member States in 2004 came with an acknowledgement that 'we are all a little touchy on this subject which is, above all, a political issue and cannot be resolved by purely administrative measures'.⁶⁷ It was a debate, according to that particular speaker, which was 'absolutely vital'. Debate or no debate, one Member was adamant that it was Parliament alone that had the jurisdiction to decide on how languages were regulated in the House.⁶⁸

In essence, Members were being asked to contemplate the effects that the proposed enlargement of the Union would have on multilingualism in and around the Parliament:

‘... the choice we are to make on language regulation is the key to a great many other decisions that will have to be taken. Can you assure us that in the future all elected members of this House will continue to have the right to express themselves in their own language, to listen to their fellow-MEPs in their own language and to write in their own language?’⁶⁹

as well as the effects that enlargement would have on safeguarding the national identities in Europe:

‘I have grave concerns about whether... the practical plans in this House to overcome the language problem really do take sufficient account of the requirements which will need to be met if we really are to safeguard European national identities and preserve the ability of the European institutions to act in the interests of the citizens of a larger European Union.’⁷⁰

Later in the year, Marianne Thyssen was to return to these themes when, after having praised the role that Christian Democrats had played in the development of the European Union, she pointed⁷¹ to the need for respect to be paid to all languages as a way of putting a brake on disenchantment with the Union among its citizens.

Indeed, what qualified a language to be considered “national” as opposed to “minority” remained a delicate subject within the PPE-DE Group. This was made abundantly clear, for example, in the comment that Luxemburgish, despite not being spoken by many people, could in no way be classified as a minority language but was, in fact, a national language.⁷²

In setting out the political philosophy of Members of his Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities [EDD], the Dane Jens-Peter Bonde⁷³ emphasised their desire to see democracies functioning in all the Member States and a ‘slimmer’ European Union itself governed by elected representatives of those States. He envisaged this structure as essentially different from the goal of a “democratic European Union” which could be achieved only when there existed a European people who shared a common language and culture. As another Member from another Group acknowledged on the same day, ‘it is really important for people to be able to work in their own language’.⁷⁴

There was both a call⁷⁵ for the quality of interpretation to be improved and a plea⁷⁶ for the delays in translation to be addressed before membership of the Union

expanded lest 'negative perceptions' become entrenched in the minds of European citizens. Astrid Thors provided Parliament with what she regarded as an example of the consequences for democracy caused by delays in translation:

'Parliament must be an open forum whose business people are able to follow. That is something Parliament will not be if we debate the Fiori report this week, because it is only today that it has become available in ten languages. I do not know what the situation is regarding the eleventh language, Danish... The main thing, however, is that the world outside should be able to follow what is happening.'⁷⁷

Certainly, there was an acceptance on the Commission's part that the more languages used, the greater the difficulty there would be in translating appropriately into all official languages. However, this difficulty, the Parliament was told by the President of the Commission, was *not* a reason not to use all the official languages because a duty exists 'to understand each other as well as possible, even though we do not always manage to do so with the precision we would like'.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the surprise expressed by one Member⁷⁹ that negotiations had already begun on new buildings, without decisions having been made in other major areas such as the language regime, sums up the feeling of more than just a few MEPs.

The looming accession to the European Union of an additional ten Member States in 2004 was also the focus of a number of parliamentary debates in 2002. In the minds of some parliamentarians, the expected enlargement raised issues of practicality in language matters. Of serious concern in 2002 was the future of the translation system and the implication that Members might no longer be able to use their own languages. Typical was the concern expressed by Jens-Peter Bonde:

'This Parliament must continue to be multilingual. Eleven languages make 110 combinations. Twenty-two languages make 462 combinations. Thirty-five languages make 1090 combinations. Can you imagine a translation from Finnish, via English and French, to Polish? With direct translation some will vote for budget line 2 while others are still voting on budget line 1. With more than one relay our system will not work. If we do not go for reform, then most of us will no longer be able to use our own language. In two years we have ten new Member States. Our buildings are not prepared for that.'⁸⁰

The same speaker also called for a reform of debating and voting procedures as well as newcomers to be invited as observers and 'have their languages accepted'.⁸¹ One

French Member⁸² even took the opportunity to remind the Commission that European languages were providing ‘tangible evidence of mankind’s genius before the Commission came into being’! What was seen to be at stake was the requirement that all Members be able to express themselves in their own language in the face of the exigencies of the budget,⁸³ what this particular Italian speaker referred to as ‘controlled multilingualism’. Another Member from the same PPE-DE Group was quite clear in his own mind that language was the most important issue when it came to enlargement; every MEP had the right to be treated in the same way as all the others, as far as language was concerned:

‘There are in fact only two options. Either we must all speak the same language or each of us must be allowed to speak our own language.’⁸⁴

A day later, Bonde told the Chamber that ‘the new candidate countries... must naturally have completely equal rights and also be entitled to have material interpreted in their own language’.⁸⁵ However, Parliament was also given some cautionary advice about over-worked staff and resulting poor quality translations,⁸⁶ and there was doubt expressed that any rules governing languages that might be formulated during the debate would ‘really be the final solution’. Nevertheless, this expression of doubt voiced by Reimer Böge was also accompanied by a rousing challenge from him that earned applause from his fellow MEPs:

‘Above all, there is one thing we must pay attention to: We need solutions that are capable of gaining a majority, that will not only be adopted in parliamentary bodies, but will meet with public approval in both the old and the new Member States of the [European Union]. With that in mind, let us go to work together!’⁸⁷

Guido Podestà added his support to the retention of multilingualism and insisted that all possible steps should be taken to make sure that the ‘identity of our cultures and our peoples’ were also retained.⁸⁸

In response to a Question on multilingualism and the ‘need for Europeans to understand each other and work together’,⁸⁹ the Commission re-affirmed its stance that communication between the institutions and citizens take place in all official languages as guaranteed by Article 21 of the EC Treaty and Regulation 1. [Refer to

“The Background to This Research” in Chapter One above] These “guarantees” stipulate that all official languages are also working languages of the institutions. What would be needed in the future, according to the Commission, were more efficient solutions for translation and interpretation.

A mild contretemps mid-year involving procedure and *rapporteur* Richard Corbett had Corbett refuting that there was any danger to the language regime – ‘Every Member will continue to be able to insist on his or her own language in all instances’.⁹⁰ Corbett’s reassurance came after separate comments were made in the Chamber to the effect that citizens in the gallery should be able to hear their own language spoken⁹¹ and that the use of less widely spoken languages should not be curbed.⁹²

The soothing words of *rapporteur* Richard Corbett, however, certainly did not satisfy Alexandros Alavanos. The latter submitted in writing his fears that plans to rationalise the work of the Parliament in the run-up to the enlargement of 2004 could lead ‘to restricting the use of all languages’.⁹³ Furthermore, he submitted that the money being spent on maintaining premises on two sites – Strasbourg and Brussels – was ‘intolerable’ at the same time as there were thoughts of reducing the number of languages used in the working of the European Union, languages:

‘which are vital if every citizen is to be able to enter Parliament, irrespective of his or her level of education, and every citizen in the European Union is to have a full understanding of the work of Parliament.’⁹⁴

Esko Seppänen declared that the European Union was not ready for enlargement because, in his words, ‘we lack the proper language skills and workspace.’⁹⁵ Being a ‘polygot, multilingual union’ was advanced as the very reason not to have delays in the accurate translation into all the languages of the European Union of the judgments given in French by the European Court of Justice.⁹⁶ This was considered especially important because the Court did not publish a decision until it was available in all the official languages even if that meant a delay of one or two years,⁹⁷ while there was even some sympathy expressed by one Member for the predicament that the European Court of Justice found itself in because ‘the European Union has decided to have such an excessive number of working languages’.⁹⁸

The difficulty of finding a solution to the languages dilemma was not underestimated during the plenary debates of 2002, but it was stated as inherently important that anyone with European Union citizenship ought to be able to stand as a candidate for election to the European Parliament, whether fluent in a national language other than their own or not. The actual difficulty was reconciling each Member's 'right' to speak in debates in their own language with the ability to provide for 'smaller' languages to be interpreted by way of just one interpreter only. A "solution" offered was to establish a practice of interpreting as many languages as possible into what were termed the 'most important languages', namely English, French and German.⁹⁹

There was support forthcoming for a "rationalisation" of the language regime to avoid the 'loss of dynamism in our meetings'.¹⁰⁰ During a strongly worded assault on the PPE-DE Group a year earlier, the same Member, Neena Gill, had called for a 'radical review' of language services. She had, on that occasion, drawn a comparison between the Commission, which managed to 'work in two languages', and the Parliament which, according to her, could not 'just add on all these additional languages and still try to be an efficient and effective organisation'.¹⁰¹

What underlay Gill's position was a belief that working methods and decision-making processes had to be reformed and modernised if European citizens were to have confidence in the European Union as a whole. The responsibility belonged to Parliament and ought not to be shirked. She stressed the need to become 'more dynamic' in the area of languages because of the financial costs involved. At the time, she had also wanted to emphasise that her position was not a rejection of linguistic diversity, 'but we cannot just add on all these additional languages and still try to be an efficient and effective organisation.'

Nevertheless, as 2002 drew to a close there seemed to be a consensus in the Parliament that enlargement should provide the impetus for enhancing 'Europe's linguistic and cultural pluralism',¹⁰² while the President-in-Office of the Council¹⁰³ was enthusiastically confident that the trial run of interpreting into twenty three languages had proved so very successful that it would be permanently implemented. So successful, according to the Danish Presidency of the Council, that the process of interpreting the proceedings of the plenary debates into all the official languages had

been rendered ‘irrevocable’ and ‘there is no way back’! Yet not every Member was satisfied. Within a month, there was a complaint ¹⁰⁴ that the Greek translation of documents lagged so far behind other translations that the delays amounted to discrimination against Greek citizens. On this occasion, the Commission’s reply was ambivalent, to say the least.

Almost six months later, in May of 2003, another call was made to investigate whether there should not be an obligation to translate many languages directly into the ‘big’ languages so that the majority of Members of Parliament would be listening to speeches that had been translated by only one interpreter.¹⁰⁵ And there was yet another call, this time by Rijk van Dam, for closer scrutiny of the expenditure on translation and interpreting services to ensure these are ‘tailored to actual need’.¹⁰⁶ It should be noted, however, that van Dam introduced this topic with a clear affirmation of the importance of multilingualism in Parliament: ‘The accessibility and comprehensibility of European political debate for citizens from all the Member States is crucial for the quality of the democracy’.

Later in 2003, an appeal was made to fellow PPE-DE Group Members to support an attempt by the PSE Group to achieve ‘better value for money’ by not, as a matter of course, having full verbatim translations of proceedings produced in all the official languages of an enlarged European Union.¹⁰⁷ In that way, the ‘scarce interpretation and translation skills’ could be tailored to best advantage. The response from one MEP of the Verts/ALE Group came in the form of an acknowledgement that many speeches in the Chamber expressed similar sentiments of doubt about the need for so many official languages yet the only realistic outcome was that ‘we must simply comply with the Treaty’.¹⁰⁸

The principle of *subsidiarity* was endorsed in 2002 by one of the advocates¹⁰⁹ of a federal model for Europe and accompanied a call to define the responsibilities of each of the institutional levels within the Union. The existence of regions with the power to make binding laws such as Catalonia could no longer be ignored, Parliament was reminded. There were echoes of this, later the same year, in a written statement¹¹⁰ from a GUE/NGL Group Member that dismissed the concept of a “eurocitizen”. Allusions were made in the written statement to both the former Soviet Union and the

former Yugoslavia where, it was said, attempts to make people from different federal republics with different languages and cultures into Soviet or Yugoslav “citizens” had proved unsuccessful. Indeed, the GUE/NGL position on enlargement, the budget and language was clearly set out in the same month:

‘Our group agrees that enlargement should become the budget’s main area of focus. In that connection we must ensure that the European Union is able to function in all its official languages right from the outset. We call on the Commission to reject any proposals that state that some languages should be accorded a position that is inferior to others with regard to interpreting. If an interpreting facility cannot exist for all languages, let us draw lots to see which ones are not to enjoy that facility.’¹¹¹

It is worth pointing out that when a Parliamentary Question¹¹² was asked in 2002 as to whether the Commission intended to ensure that a knowledge of both Dutch and French would be required of Commission staff – whose job it was to welcome visitors to the Commission buildings in Brussels – in accordance with the Belgian Constitution pertaining to the bilingual Brussels Capital Region, ‘diplomatic immunity’ as regards the host State was invoked by the Commission!

Esko Seppänen left fellow Members in no doubt about his dissatisfaction with the lack of a Finnish-speaking permanent official attached to Parliament’s Visitors Service in early 2003,¹¹³ alleging discrimination against his language (and his country). One month on, as part of a wide-ranging attack¹¹⁴ on the direction of the European Union’s policy on languages, he reiterated his dislike for the situation in Parliament’s Visitors Service, which he labelled a ‘linguistic outrage’. The speech also effectively served as a repetition of the GUE/NGL Group policy that he had outlined the previous year.¹¹⁵ A month later, MEPs were once more reminded, this time by another Member, that there was no visitors’ service in Finnish because the Secretary-General had cancelled the Finnish language post.¹¹⁶

During the same debate there was another request¹¹⁷ for the provision in Brussels and Strasbourg of monitors and permanently-installed signs scrolling through all the official languages, as well as an exhortation¹¹⁸ to ‘have respect for the individual languages of the Member States’ and to ‘hold multilingualism in esteem’. The pessimism expressed above by Seppänen was echoed during a debate on an

information and communication strategy in April 2003. Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines from the PPE-DE Group was upset lest some citizens receive translations of documents considerably later than others do, so much later that they were being effectively denied an opportunity to present amendments within the required period. Parliament's language policy, which she labelled 'reductionist', had meant some languages had become "more equal" than others, was her assertion. Her plea was for equality between all the citizens of the European Union to be respected and for 'the reform of communication to be dealt with from a more modern point of view'.¹¹⁹

Respect for the languages of each nation as well as respect for the traditions of each nation were platforms of the UEN Group in this fifth parliamentary term. The Italian Cristiana Muscardini¹²⁰ took the opportunity to re-emphasise her Group's standpoint following the introduction of the programme of the Italian Presidency of the Council by Silvio Berlusconi. It is, therefore, no surprise that UEN Members were prominent during a 4 September debate on a Report promoting the recognition of minority and regional languages. They once again categorically asserted that the powers of individual Member States would be weakened if the profile and importance of minority and regional languages were to be increased.

According to José Rebeiro e Castro, prevalent in the debate was a 'clear and conspicuous use of minority and regional languages as an offensive weapon in a brazen quest for vengeance on the part of many national minorities'.¹²¹ Such rhetoric, in fact, amounted to an endorsement of 'separatism', he alleged, and he wanted to remind Parliament that that particular approach would inevitably lead to an 'intensification of political and territorial disputes inherited from nineteenth and twentieth century conflicts and the territorial agreements which always followed them'. Furthermore, the claim was made by another Member of the same Group – this time from France – that national languages, described by him as 'one of the essential components of national unity of some Member States', were under attack.¹²² This latter speaker declared his fidelity to the principles enshrined in the French Constitution, namely that 'France is a republic, indivisible' and that 'the language of the Republic is French'. And, with regard to the matter of the proposed establishment of a Pan-European Children's television network, Rebeiro e Castro was equally

acerbic on that particular part of the Perry Report on audiovisual communications media:

‘I do not believe that a ‘European consciousness’ can be created by suppressing national languages and identities and indoctrinating babes-in-arms with artificial ‘European’ values. The European Union should resist the temptation to ‘mould’ the loyalties and characters of the citizens of the Member States.’¹²³

Cristiana Muscardini who was convinced, as were other Members of her UEN Group, that questions of an ‘exclusively internal nature’ should be left to Member States, was to later write: ‘Europe should be a union of nation states, respectful of the languages, cultures and traditions of every one of its components’.¹²⁴

Also on 4 September, what were termed the ‘extreme proposals... towards destroying our societies’ in the Sylla Report on fundamental rights in the European Union attracted the ire of one non-attached Member (formerly one of the UEN Group)¹²⁵ who rejected the notion contained in the report that France should ratify the Charter on Regional and Minority Languages. The preservation of national languages was the plea made by Bruno Gollnisch, also non-attached to any political grouping, during this debate. Like a number of other French Members from different Groups, Gollnisch was fearful that the rush to save regional languages might come at the expense of undermining or weakening national languages. He gave as an example the fact that the European Parliament provided its own delegations travelling abroad with interpreting services in English only, which led him to conclude ‘we are going down a dangerous path’.¹²⁶ Gollnisch regretted that his own mother tongue was ‘losing ground every day’ as a language of international communication, yet willingly conceded that the ‘very existence’ of some other languages was really threatened. Incidentally, the following month, umbrage was expressed that even the specific languages in which information must be provided on beaches would be determined by the European Union bureaucracy, instead of being a matter left to each Member State to decide as appropriate.¹²⁷

As with case of the number of languages to be used in the Parliament itself, there was voice given during the plenary debates both in support of and in opposition to limiting

the number of languages used in the translation of European Union documents or in communications with the Union's agencies, and not just with regard to the European Patent Office (whether that be technically regarded as an agency or not).

The fundamental right of every citizen to communicate with European Union institutions and agencies in that citizen's mother tongue was emphasised in a Question directed to the Council early in the fifth parliamentary term.¹²⁸ This Question related to the languages used at the Kosovo reconstruction agency based in Thessaloniki where only French, German and English were used – despite the fact that the agency was on Greek soil. The reply from the representative of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council indicated that a permanent solution to language arrangements at the agency had not yet been reached, bearing in mind that the agency had only just started its operations. For its part, the ELDR Group supported 'a sensible rationalisation of working languages for essential cross-border cooperation'.¹²⁹

There was a feeling, exemplified by the comments of Ole Andreasen in March 2001,¹³⁰ that too little effort was being placed on communicating well with European Union citizens – this despite the promises made by Romano Prodi at hearings of the new Commission six months earlier to give citizens 'open access to information'. According to Andreasen, the European Union in reality had no information policy, and he demanded the use of all [eleven] official languages on the Rapid database rather than just the privileged two or three 'main' languages. There was even a call¹³¹ for the provision of video streams of debates in Parliament, the Council and the Commission in all languages 'to give citizens an opportunity to become more involved'.

At about the same time, the Committee of Petitions asked¹³² that preparations be made to allow citizens of the countries due to accede in 2004 to be able to petition the European Parliament in their own language. The matter was raised again two years on when a claim was made that the failure to publish European Union regulations (as well as the Treaty of Nice) in the languages of the candidate countries amounted to a 'democratic scandal' no less.¹³³ It was argued that the candidate countries were, as a consequence, not in any position to know what they were voting on. Support for this stand was forthcoming from eight Members of five different political Groups

representing “SOS Democracy”.¹³⁴ Their contention was not only that all the treaties and rules of the European Union should have been translated into all the official languages of the applicant countries but also that these translations should have been made available to the citizens of those applicant countries through libraries and the Internet well before the actual referenda on membership took place in the applicant countries.

Parliament had, it must be noted, heard an admission of sorts from Commissioner Antonio Vitorino that the implementation of the policy to distribute information in all the official languages did not meet expectations.¹³⁵ He was willing to concede that ‘the policy of distributing information in all of the Union’s languages is something that we need to continue and build on further’. This was, of course, the same Commissioner Vitorino who had some months earlier pronounced the creation of the universal green number for the “Europe Direct” service, the aim of which was to provide information on a wide range of matters concerning the European Union, to be a success because citizens anywhere in the [fifteen] Member States were able to access an operator who spoke their language.¹³⁶

Fundamentally even more significant, I believe, were the fears expressed by Eryll McNally that the Council was expecting ‘accelerated procedures’ for “codecision” between Council and Parliament. The *rapporteur* lamented that such procedures were not as transparent or as democratic as they should be, especially since the negotiations between the two bodies were ‘inevitably’ conducted ‘in only one language’.¹³⁷

Reading the plenary debates, one notices that a request by someone for the use of more languages in one context is often offset by the request from someone else to restrict multilingual use in another context. For example, on 5 February 2002, one speaker¹³⁸ chided the European Investment Bank for listing its activities on its home page in only two or three languages, while another speaker¹³⁹ on the same day urged the Commission to give local authorities more flexibility with regard to language policy, in particular the obligation to translate requests for assistance between authorities. The latter Member was essentially asking for more frequent implementation of “decentralisation”. When complaining that too much information is provided in too general a form, often in all the official languages when few, if any of

them, may be appropriate, Ole Andreasen provided the Parliament what might be regarded as a very concise definition of the European Union doctrine of *subsidiarity*. He said:

‘Decentralisation means that the tasks of providing information are delegated to the representations in the Member States, together with the responsibility for these and the necessary financial resources. In this way, the tasks are carried out as close to the people as possible and in the manner required by the people in the particular country, region or local community.’¹⁴⁰

Andreasen gave as an example a brochure, which although translated in to all the official languages, might not serve the needs of people in Lapland or Sicily either in terms of the content of the information or the way they received that information. With regard to the issuing of a prospectus, the PPE-DE Group was ‘very concerned to ensure that the language regime cannot be used to protect markets’ according to Theresa Villiers. Admitting that they would like to have seen something more ‘radical’, she added: ‘I think there are safeguards which will prevent the difficulties we have seen with the current prospectus directive and make it much more difficult for language to be used to protect national markets.’¹⁴¹ One can only wonder what Villiers, who was from the United Kingdom, thought of the jibe delivered on the same day by the French MEP Pervenche Beres directed at the “British approach” to linguistic diversity!¹⁴²

Media reports, in early 2001, that the Swedish Presidency of the Council had decided that the German language would not have the same status as English and French at a number of European Union meetings led to German and Austrian representatives saying that they would not attend those meetings and the issue becoming something of a *cause célèbre* at the time. One Member from Sweden,¹⁴³ who pointedly chose to ask his Question in German, demanded to know why the Swedish Presidency was discriminating against the German language. The reply from the representative of the Swedish Presidency of the Council reminded Members once more that the languages to be used by the Community were set by Regulation No 1 in 1958 [Refer to Chapter One “The Background to This Research” above] and that Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibited any discrimination based, in particular, on language. While it would definitely not be the intention of the Presidency to discriminate among

Member States based on language, continued the reply, nevertheless it may be necessary ‘for reasons of efficiency, urgency or cost’ to limit the number of languages.¹⁴⁴

This incident involving the use of the German language, although occurring relatively early in the fifth parliamentary term of the European Parliament, says much about the reality of linguistic diversity in and around Parliament in the years from 2000 to 2003. There is absolutely no doubt that the majority of spoken and written contributions to the plenary debates were in favour of maintaining linguistic diversity. Indeed, the majority of contributions to the plenary debates even looked forward to the addition of more languages upon the accession of ten new Member States in 2004. There were exceptions to this, of course. Just as is evident in the contemporary academic literature, acknowledgement was given in the debates to the efficiency and financial cost effectiveness that would result from the use of fewer languages, or even the use of just one language, in and around Parliament. Clearly, Members of the Union for Europe of the Nations Group spoke most strongly in favour of the retention of national languages.

But representatives of *all* political groupings spoke up for linguistic diversity and, as appears in the contemporary academic literature on language ecology, there was a feeling – one might be justified in describing it as the dominant sentiment among Members – that the European Union could not afford *not* to embrace linguistic diversity. Furthermore, Members of the European Parliament were supported in this view by representatives of the Presidencies of the Council and by the Commission. Frustrations voiced in the plenary debates about the delays (or accuracy) of translations and the costs associated with the translation service were inevitably met with expressed determination to improve those services. Representatives from Catalonia, Galicia, the Basque region and Alto Adige, among others, were very vocal in wanting regional and so called “minority” languages incorporated, to a greater or lesser extent, in and around Parliament. [The debates surrounding autochthonous regional and minority languages are reviewed in Chapter Five below] Regulation One from 1958 was quoted time and time again as the legal basis for ensuring linguistic diversity in and around Parliament while Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental

Rights provided comfort for those who might have thought that time (and progress?) was catching up with Regulation One.

Despite all this, there is the nagging doubt that both the philosophy espoused and the sentiment embraced by the majority of Members of the European Parliament were having to come face to face with the realities of a globalised world and market place. References to the essential difference between the European Union and the United States of America as being the European Union's acceptance and promotion of linguistic diversity might have masked the fear that this difference was going to become increasingly difficult to maintain in practice in the future.

¹ Glyn Ford [PSE] (UK) 4 July 2000

² On 3 September 2002 Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE) reported to Parliament: 'Recent accidents have demonstrated that an inadequate command of aviation's official language, English, can have tragic consequences. Suffice for me to remind you of a few serious accidents, one in France and one in Italy, which were both directly the result of the fact that the aviation staff did not have a sufficient command of English, the official language.'

³ Theodorus Bouwman [Verts/ALE] (NL): 'A specified language must be spoken. Which language are we going to speak? English, as in international shipping or aviation? So, will English also be the language of rail transport? If that is the case, I immediately propose that from that moment onwards, we only speak English in Parliament as well. That will make all communication very easy.' 12 February 2001

On 13 January 2003 José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT) wanted 'a single working language for all international transport, as in the world of aviation', a theme he returned to later that year – on 23 October – in a written endorsement of establishing one common working language for international transport. In addition, to applause from MEPs, on 2 September 2003, Herman Vermeer [ELDR] (NL) labelled as undesirable any attempts to allow languages other than English to be used as languages of communication in the maritime world: 'We need to try to follow other examples of uniformity in international language use. In aviation, for example, English is the right language of communication.' In response, Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou affirmed that the Council would reject any Amendment which sought to annul the compulsory use of English in communication between ship and shore whenever the parties involved did not speak the same language.

⁴ Alexandros Alavanos [GUE/NGL] (HE): '... whereas we have a multilingual Parliament, with all due respect to the English language, we seem to have an English-speaking Commission.' 13 March 2001

⁵ Gianfranco Dell'Alba [TDI] (IT) 3 September 2001

⁶ Neil Kinnock 3 September 2001

⁷ Reino Paasilinna [PSE] (SU) 3 October 2001

⁸ Giorgis Katiforis [PSE] (HE) 17 January 2002

⁹ Alexandros Alavanos [GUE/NGL] (HE) 5 February 2002

¹⁰ Cecilia Malmström [ELDR] (SV) 10 June 2002 [Her sentiments echo those of Neena Gill [PSE] (UK) 14 May 2002 – see footnote ¹⁰⁰ below]

¹¹ Elizabeth Montfort [UEN] (FR) 30 November 2000

¹² Michael Gahler [PPE-DE] (DE) 3 July 2002

- ¹³ Paul Marie Coûteaux [EDD] (FR) 19 November 2002
- ¹⁴ Paul Marie Coûteaux [EDD] (FR) 2 July 2002
- ¹⁵ According to Paul Marie Coûteaux, the other two “weapons” were American culture and American images. 20 March 2003
- ¹⁶ Margie Sudre [PPE-DE] (FR): ‘Finally, we would keenly encourage any European or national policy designed to promote linguistic diversity. A Europe rich in 20 languages and as many cultures must not be reduced to a Europe of just one language. That requires effort on the part of everyone, however...’ 2 July 2003
- ¹⁷ Marco Cappato [NI] (IT) 4 September 2003
- ¹⁸ Gérard Caudron [GUE/NGL] (FR): ‘The monopoly of English is neither good for Europe nor for Great Britain...’ 4 September 2003 Early in this parliamentary term – on 13 April 2000 – Caudron had advocated that Parliament should support the teaching of Esperanto.
- ¹⁹ Piia-Noora Kauppi [PPE-DE] (SU) 5 July 2000
- ²⁰ Joachim Wuermeling [PPE-DE] (DE) 5 July 2000
- ²¹ Willy De Clercq [ELDR] (BE) 5 July 2000
- ²² Frits Bolkestein: ‘May I point out that the European Patent Office is not a Community agency. There is a European Patent Convention and 15 Member States have signed the Convention but a number of other states have also signed it so the Commission cannot tell the European Patent Office what its language arrangements should be.’ 5 July 2000
- ²³ Jaime Valdevielso de Cué [PPE-DE] (ES): ‘The Commission has submitted a proposal for a regulation on the Community patent in which it is proposed, allegedly in order to reduce costs, that the official languages for this purpose be French, English and German... What measures will be taken to ensure that the Community patent does not entail discrimination against enterprises whose native language is not German, English or French?’ 5 July 2001
- ²⁴ Bart Staes [Verts/ALE] (BE) 3 October 2001
- ²⁵ Annemie Nyets-Uytebroeck 3 October 2001
- ²⁶ Bart Staes [Verts/ALE] (BE) 3 October 2001
- ²⁷ A matter made clear almost three months earlier – 17 January 2002 – by Carmen Cerdeira Morterero [PSE] (ES): ‘... the documents to be transmitted must be translated into all official languages of the Executing State. If the person liable to pay the fine or even go to prison knows only one of the official languages of the executing country he would not be able to read these documents affecting him, which would be an infringement of his rights.’
- Speaking with respect to a child custody case on 13 March 2002, Michael Cashman [PSE] (UK) told the Parliament: ‘We are [fifteen] different Member States with different languages and different cultures, but we must never use language as a means of excluding people from the debate or denying them their rights.’
- Back on 20 September 2000, Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU) recalled having once met an old man who said to her, ‘I am in no doubt at all that, when I speak to my God, I can speak in my own language. I also hope, however, that the same will apply in the courts I may be called before!’ Well, at least the Commission empathised with the linguistic plight of victims of criminal offences.
- Furthermore, on 11 December 2000, Commissioner David Byrne declared: ‘It is important to make it possible for the victim to have information in a language they understand. In certain cases, it might not be a language of the European Union. In other cases, it might be possible to get the information needed in a language of the Union which is not their own.’
- ²⁸ Marianne Thyssen [PPE-DE] (BE) 9 April 2002
- ²⁹ Janelly Fourtou [PPE-DE] (FR) 9 April 2002
- ³⁰ Paolo Bartolozzi [PPE-DE] (IT) 9 April 2002
- ³¹ Manuel Medina Ortega [PSE] (ES) 9 April 2002.
- ³² Ioannis Koukiadis [PSE] (HE) 9 April 2002
- ³³ Toine Manders [ELDR] (NL): ‘We agreed in Lisbon to turn the European economy into the world’s most competitive knowledge economy, and I am of the view that, when it really

comes down to it, we will not act on this intention, which is evident from the many amendments on this topic.’ 9 April 2002

³⁴ Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU) 9 April 2002

³⁵ Ilda Figueiredo [GUE/NGL] (PT): ‘... the linguistic arrangements proposed in this report, the so-called ‘Alicante arrangements’ are totally unacceptable for the commercial framework since they only provide for the use of the five languages of the largest countries, which contravenes the principle of non-discrimination between undertakings, creates a directory of main languages, sets precedents for the future and threatens all the official languages.’ 9 April 2002

³⁶ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 10 April 2002

³⁷ Neil MacCormick [Verts/ALE] (UK) 9 April 2002

³⁸ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE): ‘... all European citizens should be able to address the Union’s bodies in their own language, including in patent applications, and they should also be able to receive a reply in their own language...’ 9 April 2002

³⁹ The allusion is surely to a very different sort of force from that which Lennart Sacrédeus [PPE-DE] (SV) was worried about on 15 May 2002 when he asked about foreign soldiers on border control duties: ‘What would be the language of command? Should there be an international language of command or should the country’s native language be used?’!

⁴⁰ Frank Vanhecke [NI] (BE) continued: ‘In fact, the OVV, the Flemish Associations Consultation Centre, a large representative umbrella organisation for a large number of Flemish cultural-political associations in my country, is making similar demands, and has decided in this case that if the European Union fails to come up with the goods, Europe is at risk of becoming an increasingly alienated occupying force instead of a co-operative based on equality, with respect for the national identity of all Members, as is, in fact, enshrined in the basic treaties. This serves as a serious warning issued by a large and important cultural-political association. This voice should also be heard in the European Union.’ 9 April 2002

⁴¹ Jean-Maurice Dehousse [PSE] (BE) 10 April 2002

⁴² Jan Andersson, Göran Färm, Ewa Hedkvist Petersen, Anneli Hulthén, Hans Karlsson and Maj Britt Theorin – [PSE] (SV) 10 April 2002

⁴³ Toine Manders [ELDR] (NL): ‘We need an affordable and uniform European patent system for the European market. The discussion surrounding the language regime has illustrated the fact that, unfortunately, political sentiments have carried more weight than practical arguments. Translation costs push up the price of the patent disproportionately, so that it will become too costly for European industry, the ultimate users.’ 10 April 2002 [Refer to footnote ³³ above]

⁴⁴ Charles Tannock [PPE-DE] (UK): ‘I also lament the lateness in bringing forward the much-needed Community patent, due to excessive sensitivity on the language issue which will only add to the cost for SMEs and make the procedures unworkable.’ 10 April 2002

⁴⁵ Camilo Nogueira Román [Verts/ALE] (PT): ‘I defend unequivocally the right of all the official languages of the Community to be used in all circumstances, particularly since in the near future there might be a tendency to renounce this principle, in light of the increase from 11 to 22 or more official languages when enlargement to include further states takes place. I also believe that if a European Union language is to be considered the most appropriate as a working language, its universal dimension should not be forgotten. By this token, I should like to remind you that the Portuguese language – including Brazilian and Galician Portuguese – is the third universal language of the European Union, following only English and Spanish. This must be taken into account where patents and indeed any other issues are concerned.’ 10 April 2002

⁴⁶ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘I did not vote in favour of the Community patent. As a fervent supporter of Europe, I had wanted to be able to vote in favour but I was prevented from doing so by the linguistic discrimination included in this draft text... In law and in fact, this principle is not respected in this text or in the institutions of the Union in

general... I have no doubt that we need to make the technical adjustment to this equality, but this adjustment must not contradict the principle.’ 10 April 2002

⁴⁷ Bernard Poignant [PSE] (FR): ‘It is up to us to construct this dialectic of European unity and its linguistic diversity.’ 12 April 2000

⁴⁸ Reino Paasilinna [PSE] (SU) 12 April 2000

⁴⁹ Joaquim Picarreta [PPE-DE] (PT) 10 April 2003

⁵⁰ José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT): ‘The *rapporteur* has ultimately missed an opportunity to take a new, democratic and sensible look at the EU’s information and communication policy, with a view to providing a genuine service to the citizens. He has chosen to stick with the tired old model for providing information, which is founded on clichés and sacrifices pluralism and practical sense at the confused altar of unrealistic and abstract ‘joint visions’ and of politically correct banalities... In fact, the well-known spreading across the European institutions of the single thought on the development of the European model weakens democratic debate, distances many citizens and narrows Europe’s horizons. Impartiality and doctrinal pluralism are the main victims of this propagandist form of ‘information’, which is clearly discriminatory, frequently confusing electoral propaganda with information about the institutions. The fact that the citizens have little knowledge of the EU and feel relatively uninvolved with it (according to Eurobarometer) clearly demonstrates the failure of this strategy.’ 10 April 2003

⁵¹ Arlene McCarthy [PSE] (UK) 11 June 2002

⁵² Concepció Ferrer [PPE-DE] (ES) 10 April 2003

⁵³ Werner Langen [PPE-DE] (DE) 5 July 2000

⁵⁴ Carlo Fatuzzo [PPE-DE] (IT) 15 March 2001

⁵⁵ Michel Barnier 8 September 2000

⁵⁶ Jacques Chirac 4 July 2000

⁵⁷ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘... there is nothing more natural, more human, and more keenly felt by the citizens than devotion to one’s nation.’ 2 October 2000.

⁵⁸ Ulpu Iivari [PSE] (SU) 5 September 2000

⁵⁹ Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU): ‘Not all languages are in fact equal in the EU in this respect.’ 5 September 2000

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Montfort [UEN] (FR): ‘... a decision whose predictable consequences are the gradual erosion of national identities.’ 14 December 2000

⁶¹ Elizabeth Montfort [UEN] (FR): ‘Why deny, furthermore, that the democratic alibi of this integrated Europe is nothing but a false nose? An enlarged integrationist Europe is not by nature democratic: in fact it violates one of the most basic of human rights, the right to nationhood. Need we remind ourselves that democracy does not boil down to having a vote? Democracy presupposes dialogue, which in turn presupposes a shared feeling of community, which is often linked to language. Our debates within this Chamber increasingly resemble a series of monologues than real exchanges.’ 30 November 2000

⁶² Georges Berthu [UEN] (FR): ‘... the Charter is too reticent on the existence of national communities and their right to frame their own regulations ... the new requirement for non-discrimination ... contradicts the French Constitution which stipulates that the language of the Republic of France is French.’ 14 November 2000

⁶³ Marianne Eriksson [GUE/NGL] (SV) 16 January 2001

⁶⁴ José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT): ‘No one wants to give up the democratic essence of their own country, their own language and culture...’ 13 February 2001

⁶⁵ Efstratios Korakas [GUE/NGL] (HE) 14 May 2001

⁶⁶ Per Stenmarck [PPE-DE] (SV) 3 April 2001

⁶⁷ Myrsini Zorba [PSE] (HE) 5 July 2001

⁶⁸ Joachim Wuermeling [PPE-DE] (DE) 5 July 2001

⁶⁹ Marianne Thyssen [PPE-DE] (BE) 4 July 2001

⁷⁰ Reimer Böge [PPE-DE] (DE) 4 September 2001

- ⁷¹ Marianne Thyssen [PPE-DE] (BE) 28 November 2001
- ⁷² For example, Astrid Lulling [PPE-DE] (LU): ‘There are languages which are not spoken by many people but which are nevertheless national languages, such as Luxemburgish. This is not a minority language.’ 13 December 2001
- ⁷³ Jens-Peter Bonde [EDD] (DA) 3 October 2001
- ⁷⁴ Neil MacCormick [Verts/ALE] (UK) He was forced to concede, however, that ‘most scientists work in English much of the time’. 3 October 2001
- ⁷⁵ Eija-Riitta Korhola [PPE-DE] (SU) 22 October 2001
- ⁷⁶ Neena Gill [PSE] (UK): ‘... what will this mean when we have 10 more languages? We must address this issue because it causes us fundamental problems in terms of the image of Parliament. It creates negative perceptions in the minds of European citizens, in that the European Parliament is seen as undynamic and unresponsive.’ 23 October 2001
- ⁷⁷ Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU) 12 November 2001
- ⁷⁸ Romano Prodi, President of the Commission: ‘... the problem is that we do not use one single language: we are fortunate and proud to be able to use 11, and there will soon be 20. Therefore, we must endeavour to adapt. The title [of the White Paper] we have selected is not a title I like much, precisely because there is never a single term which translates appropriately into all the languages.’ 4 September 2001
- ⁷⁹ Neena Gill [PSE] (UK) 11 December 2001
- ⁸⁰ Jens-Peter Bonde [EDD] (DA) 15 January 2002
- ⁸¹ Jens-Peter Bonde [EDD] (DA) 15 January 2002
- ⁸² Thierry de La Perrière [NI] (FR) 28 February 2002
- ⁸³ Guido Podestà [PPE-DE] (IT) 12 March 2002
- ⁸⁴ Per Stenmarck [PPE-DE] (SV): ‘If I, as a Swede, have the right to speak Swedish and a Portuguese Member has the right to speak Portuguese, then a Hungarian Member must be allowed to speak Hungarian and a Lithuanian to speak Lithuanian. The Committee on Budgets has backed what the Podestà Group calls controlled multilingualism.’ 12 March 2002
- ⁸⁵ Jens-Peter Bonde [EDD] (DA) 13 March 2002
- ⁸⁶ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL): ‘The Committee on Budgets is now looking for resources to absorb the effects of the expected doubling of the number of official languages at the lowest possible cost, among other means, by using remote interpreters who are also required to translate into languages other than their mother tongues. Bad-quality translations and overburdened staff cannot solve this problem.’ 12 March 2002
- ⁸⁷ Reimer Böge [PPE-DE] (DE) 13 March 2002
- ⁸⁸ Guido Podestà [PPE-DE] (IT): ‘I believe we must retain the principle of multilingualism. With continued enlargement, on the one hand we are taking up an historical challenge that we do not, of course, want to miss, but on the other we must also do what we can so that the identity of our cultures and our peoples is not lost.’
- ⁸⁹ Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou [PPE-DE] (HE): ‘Will it [the White Paper on European Governance] include the languages of the candidate countries in this framework? How does it view the problem of multilingualism, given the need for Europeans to understand each other and work together?’ 11 April 2002
- ⁹⁰ Richard Corbett [PSE] (UK) 10 June 2002
- ⁹¹ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE): ‘It is, of course, important for us to be able to talk in our native tongues, but it is just as important for all citizens also to be able to hear their language in the gallery...’ 10 June 2002
- ⁹² Bernd Posselt [PPE-DE] (DE): ‘I wish furthermore to take a stand against all the motions that seek to limit the less widely spoken languages or the smaller groups, to make this House bureaucratic and centralised.’ 10 June 2002
- ⁹³ Alexandros Alavanos [GUE/NGL] (HE) 12 June 2002

- ⁹⁴ Alexandros Alavanos [GUE/NGL] (HE): ‘... especially when attempts are being made to cut back on the number of languages used in the work of the European Union, which are vital...’ 12 June 2002
- ⁹⁵ Esko Seppänen [GUE/NGL] (SU) 2 July 2002
- ⁹⁶ Neil McCormick [Verts/ALE] (UK) *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market*: ‘... in order that citizens and their legal advisers throughout the European Union are up-to-date on the law of this Union and how it is properly interpreted.’ 24 September 2002
- ⁹⁷ Joachim Wuermeling [PPE-DE] (DE): ‘... the backlog of translations means that the finished judgments stay in a drawer at the [European Court of Justice] for between one and two years until they can be published.’ 24 September 2002
- ⁹⁸ Manuel Medina Ortega [PSE] (ES) 24 September 2002
- ⁹⁹ Kyösti Virrankoski [ELDR] (SU): ‘All of us must be able to take part in the debate in our own mother tongue. On the other hand, it is virtually impossible to arrange for the smaller languages to be interpreted just through one interpreter. For example, Finnish is interpreted first into English, say, and only then into Greek.’ 14 May 2002
- ¹⁰⁰ Neena Gill [PSE] (UK) 14 May 2002 [A very similar viewpoint is expressed in a speech given by Cecilia Malmström [ELDR] (SV) on 10 June 2002 – see footnote ¹⁰ above]
- ¹⁰¹ Neena Gill [PSE] (UK): ‘All of us know that enlargement will have far-reaching effects on all aspects of Parliament's services... This will need considerable planning, with all the implications well thought through... I wish to stress that the three-year plan should be considered because we face many challenges, but we should – and must – be more dynamic in all areas, in particular languages and buildings, because that is where the substantial costs lie. I hope the plan will in some ways think the unthinkable and radically review the language services, given that in two to three years' time we may have six new official languages to deal with. Just to give you some food for thought: the Commission is a very different institution from us, but it manages to work in two languages.’ 16 May 2001
- ¹⁰² José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT): ‘... [enlargement] must not be used as an excuse for lowering the standard of our interpreting...’ 19 November 2002
- ¹⁰³ Bertel Haarder: ‘It was an historic event we experienced this morning, and I think Parliament deserves to be applauded for having in this way demonstrated what we shall all be embarking upon in a year and a half's time, as well as for having demonstrated that the process is feasible..’ 19 November 2002
- ¹⁰⁴ Efstratios Korakas [GUE/NGL] (HE) 19 December 2002
- ¹⁰⁵ Kyösti Virrankoski [ELDR] (SU) 13 May 2003
- ¹⁰⁶ Rijk van Dam [EDD] (NL): ‘Diversity as an essential characteristic of European cultures finds expression in the existence of many languages.’ 13 May 2003
- ¹⁰⁷ Den Dover [PPE-DE] (UK): ‘...I applaud the very speedy and accurate work done by Parliament's staff in producing verbatim versions of speeches in this Chamber. These are translated into the main languages within a few days, but it is unrealistic to expect that full verbatim translations should be produced in all the languages of the enlarged European Union... Individual requests, as called for in the amendment for particular needs, must surely be the way forward.’ 21 October 2003 [On the matter of achieving better value for money, this Conservative MEP for North West England was himself very much the subject of media attention in 2008 when it was revealed that he claimed he had done nothing wrong in paying his wife and daughter a reported £758,000 through an outside company for secretarial and support services over nine years. The BBC reported (5 June 2008) that Dover said: “I am totally within the rules and regulations of the European Parliament. I put that in writing. I am not a director, have no shareholdings, have no payments from any outside company.” Asked if it looked “dodgy” to voters he replied: “It may do but I put it to you that there are an awful lot of MPs and MEPS who are employing their own family members.” He said his wife was fully qualified in book-keeping accountancy and his daughter as a secretary. “They get market

rates but they put in two or three times the number of hours. They just never stop. Therefore I am totally innocent of any charges.”]

¹⁰⁸ Jan Mulder [ELDR] (NL) 21 October 2003

¹⁰⁹ Concepció Ferrer [PPE-DE] (ES) 16 May 2002

¹¹⁰ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL): ‘The promotion of citizenship of the EU... does not do a great deal for me.’ 5 September 2002

¹¹¹ Esko Seppänen [GUE/NGL] (SU) 24 September 2002

¹¹² Bart Staes [Verts/ALE] (BE) 13 June 2002 The Commission’s answer included: ‘The functional immunity enjoyed by international organisations as regards their host States was enshrined ... The internal provisions of Belgian law regarding the rules governing the languages of the Brussels Capital Region do not therefore apply to the European institutions which have their headquarters in Brussels.’

¹¹³ Esko Seppänen [GUE/NGL] (SU): ‘This, I believe, is discrimination against one Member State and one language. It is not in the interests of Parliament if all languages do not have equal status.’ 10 February 2003

¹¹⁴ Esko Seppänen [GUE/NGL] (SU): ‘... language restrictions and the destruction of national linguistic identities would seem to be the future of the EU.... If not all languages in the EU are to be used equally, let us draw lots for those languages that are to be the so-called working languages.’ 11 March 2003

¹¹⁵ Esko Seppänen [GUE/NGL] (SU) 24 September 2002

¹¹⁶ Reino Paasilinna [PSE] (SU) 8 April 2003

¹¹⁷ Den Dover [PPE-DE] (UK) 11 March 2003

¹¹⁸ Kyösti Virrankoski [ELDR] (SU) 11 March 2003

¹¹⁹ Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines [PPE-DE] (ES): ‘Parliament’s reform policy on languages reduces the equality between them, it creates differences between some languages and others.... And I am surprised that, in the reform, including of buildings, there has been no intention to broaden languages and communication, but rather a reductionist spirit has prevailed.’ 8 April 2003

¹²⁰ Cristiana Muscardini [UEN] (IT) 2 July 2003 Interestingly, as Silvio Berlusconi, in his capacity as the President-in-Office of the Council, rose to speak, Members from the Verts/ALE Group held up placards stating, in various languages, that all are equal before the law.

¹²¹ José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT): ‘I feel that the *rapporteur*’s approach to this question gives impetus to separatist tendencies within the Member States... The tone of the debate on this report provides conclusive proof of what I have just said. Its prevailing characteristics have been an inability to understand much of what was said... ’ 4 September 2003 [See also footnote ⁶⁴ 13 February 2001 above]

¹²² Charles Pasqua [UEN] (FR): ‘Not only does the plan aim to recognise linguistic diversity in an objective way, but also to promote it to the detriment of national languages... ’ 4 September 2003 [Compare the similarity of this with the speech from another French MEP referred to in footnote ⁶² above]

¹²³ José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT) 4 September 2003

¹²⁴ Cristiana Muscardini [UEN] (IT) 24 September 2003

¹²⁵ Georges Berthu [NI] (FR) 4 September 2003 [See also footnote ⁶² 14 November 2000 above] Berthu was a Member of the UEN Group on 14 November 2000; indeed he was a former Co-president of that Group.

¹²⁶ Bruno Gollnisch [NI] (FR) 4 September 2003 It is worth noting that today European Parliament delegations travelling abroad are provided with interpreting services in more than one language, as the 2008 delegation to New Zealand clearly exemplified.

¹²⁷ Cristina García-Orcóyen Tormo [PPE-DE] (ES) 20 October 2003

¹²⁸ Ioannis Marinos [PPE-DE] (HE) 14 April 2000

¹²⁹ Sarah Ludford [ELDR] (UK) 1 February 2001

¹³⁰ Ole Andreasen [ELDR] (DA): ‘Too much information is only available in the EU’s main languages. Go, for example, into the Rapid database, where you will see, for example, that even Romano Prodi’s speeches are only available in two or three languages. We have eleven official languages in the EU, and all eleven must be used.’ 12 March 2001

¹³¹ Paul Rübig [PPE-DE] (OS) 14 March 2001

¹³² Roy Perry [PPE-DE] (UK) *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Petitions* 3 April 2001

¹³³ Jens-Peter Bonde [EDD] (DA): ‘... the Commission devises propaganda instead of making factual information available.’ 9 April 2003

¹³⁴ Brent Hindrup Andersen [EDD] (DA), Georges Berthu [NI] (FR), Jens-Peter Bonde [EDD] (DA), Per Gahrton [Verts/ALE] (SV), Robert Goodwill [PPE-DE] (UK), Caroline Lucas [Verts/ALE] (UK), José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT) and Ulla Margrethe Sandbæk [EDD] (DA) 9 April 2003

¹³⁵ Commissioner Antonio Vitorino 8 April 2003

¹³⁶ Commissioner Antonio Vitorino: ‘Small steps are often, in practice, the most important ones.’ 4 September 2002

¹³⁷ Eryll McNally [PSE] (UK) *rapporteur for the Intelligent Energy for Europe Programme* 12 May 2003

¹³⁸ Wolfgang Ilgenfritz [NI] (OS) 5 February 2002

¹³⁹ Piia-Noora Kauppi [PPE-DE] (SU): ‘Why should it be a requirement to translate a request for assistance into the official language of the second country if, for example, a Finn and a Greek come to an understanding that they will deal with one another in French?’ 5 February 2002

In a similar vein, José Rebeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT) wanted public information on standards of water quality in bathing areas to be communicated on signs with symbols ‘in a range of languages, not just English or French’. 21 October 2003

¹⁴⁰ Ole Andreasen [ELDR] (DA) 11 March 2002 In response, Commissioner Bolkestein was not swayed by Andreasen’s argument on the particular language issue with a re-affirmation that any part of Community law had to be made available in all official languages of the European Union.

¹⁴¹ Theresa Villiers [PPE-DE] (UK). 30 June 2003

¹⁴² Pervenche Beres [PSE]: ‘For while I can understand that a Dutchman, a Frenchman or an Italian might make the case for a language regime which is not designed to protect markets, I imagine a different concept of market protection when I hear it from the mouth of a Londoner.’ 30 June 2003

¹⁴³ Per Gahrton [Verts/ALE] (SV) 15 March 2001

¹⁴⁴ The sensitivity of the language issue is illustrated in this excerpt from the record of the debates of 16 May 2001 when a very defensive Pasqualina Napoletano [PSE] (IT) protested: ‘When Mr Dupuis requested that the vote be referred to committee *because the translations of the amendments were not available in all the languages*, we granted his request.’ [My emphasis] 16 May 2001

CHAPTER FIVE: SANTA CLAUS AND MINORITY INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Two related themes provide the subject matter of this Chapter. Firstly, an attempt is made to gauge to what extent there was support for regional and minority indigenous (autochthonous) languages among the elected Members and their Political Groups during the fifth term of the European Parliament. The extent of this support will be judged by reference to both the oral contributions and the written declarations recorded in the “Verbatim report of proceedings” of the plenary debates.

Secondly, the efforts of those Members who decided to express protest, orally or in writing, during the same plenary debates in the European Parliament against their own country’s treatment of these regional and minority languages are explored. The academic, David Crystal, has theorised: ‘if a country is proud of its right to have its national language used in Brussels, Luxembourg, and Strasbourg, it becomes much more difficult for that country to deny the same right to its own constituent ethnic communities’. ¹ This theme also attempts to determine how successful the protests were by a consideration of the responses to their protests by other Members of the Parliament and by their exchanges in the Chamber with representatives of the European Commission and the representatives of the various Presidencies of the Council of Ministers. The responses and interchanges referred to in this Chapter are once again those recorded in the “Verbatim report of proceedings” of the plenary debates.

Members of the European Parliament who played a prominent part in the plenary debates on these related themes during the fifth parliamentary term are listed in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1 Major contributors to the debates on the use of regional and minority autochthonous languages

MEMBER	POLITICAL GROUP	MEMBER STATE	POLITICAL PARTY
Borghезio, Mario	TDI	IT	Lega Nord per l'indipendenza della Padania
Caveri, Luciano	ELDR	IT	Union Valdôtaine
Claeys, Philip	NI	BE	Vlaams Belang
Coelho, Carlos	PPE-DE	PT	Partido Social Democrata
Costa, Paolo	ELDR	IT	Partito Democratico
Dillen, Karel	NI	BE	Vlaams Blok
Ebner, Michl	PPE-DE	IT	Südtiroler Volkspartei (Partito popolare sudtirolese)
Echerer, Raina	Verts/ALE	OS	Die Grünen - Die Grüne Alternative
Esclope, Alain	EDD	FR	Chasse, Pêche, Nature, Traditions
Esteve, Pere	ELDR	ES	Convergència Democràtica Catalunya
Ferrer, Concepció	PPE-DE	ES	Unió Democràtica de Catalunya
Gahler, Michael	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands
Gallagher, Pat the Cope	UEN	IR	Fianna Fáil Party
Gasòliba i Böhm, Carles-Alfred	ELDR	ES	Convergència Democràtica Catalunya
Gollnisch, Bruno	NI	FR	Front national
Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso, Koldo	NI	ES	Euskal Herritarrok
Grosch, Mathieu	PPE-DE	BE	Christlich Soziale Partei
MacCormick, Neil	Verts/ALE	UK	Scottish National Party
Maes, Nelly	Verts/ALE	BE	België Spirit
Mayol i Raynal, Miquel	Verts/ALE	ES	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya
Meijer, Erik	GUE/NGL	NL	Socialistische Partij
Morgan, Eluned	PSE	UK	Labour Party
Nogueira Román, Camilo	Verts/ALE	ES	Bloque Nacionalista Galego
Ó Neachtain, Seán	UEN	IR	Fianna Fáil Party
Ortuondo Larrea, Josu	Verts/ALE	ES	Partido Nacionalista Vasco
Pack, Doris	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands
Pasqua, Charles	UEN	FR	Rassemblement pour la France
Posselt, Bernd	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern e.V.
Prets, Christa	PSE	OS	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs
Smet, Miet	PPE-DE	BE	Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams
Staes, Bart	Verts/ALE	BE	Groen
Thors, Astrid	ELDR	SU	Svenska folkpartiet
Vallvé, Joan	ELDR	ES	Convergència Democràtica Catalunya
Vanhecke, Frank	NI	BE	Vlaams Belang
Wyn, Eurig	Verts/ALE	UK	Plaid Cymru - Parti of Wales
Zabell, Theresa	PPE-DE	ES	Partido Popular

‘I would have liked you [Commissioner Reding] to be more like Santa Claus and tell me now how much extra money we will have to produce in future for the minorities and for promoting minority languages’ – Michl Ebner (IT)

‘Linguistic and cultural diversity is not about defining or redefining boundaries; it underpins the cultural strength of our enlarging European Union’ – Seán Ó Neachtain (IR)

Was the support for linguistic diversity as expressed in the plenary debates of the fifth term of the European Parliament support for only the national languages of Member States or did the support of elected representatives in the Chamber extend to indigenous regional and minority languages?

Three Questions that were asked in Parliament in early 2000 clarify the direction that some Members were going on the issue of linguistic diversity. One Question ² asked the Commission to spell out its legislative timeline for the promotion and ‘diffusion’ of regional and minority languages while two other Questions ³ sought assurances that adequate funds would be spent on actions promoting regional and minority languages as part of the Commission’s strategy for achieving linguistic diversity. The answers provided to these Members by the Commission – incorporating expressions such as ‘further preparations are needed’, ‘the matter is currently under discussion’ and ‘European Languages Year seeks to make the general public more aware of the wide linguistic diversity of the Union and to encourage people to learn more languages’ – seemed to indicate that the Commission was “buying time” before definite proposals were submitted. Although the languages targeted for special support, it was stated by the Commission, would not just be the official languages – Irish and Luxembourgish – but also ‘other languages recognised by the Member States’.

There was certainty in the mind of Josu Ortuondo Larrea that to talk of European languages necessarily included not just consideration of the “official languages” but consideration also of regional and minority languages ‘which are the essence and lifeblood of the wealth of our unity in diversity’. ⁴ Some of these languages like Euskera or Gaelic were ‘thousands of years old’, he said. The learning of languages was seen as the appropriate route to becoming aware of our cultural diversity and, at

the same time, the learning of languages contributed to the European Union objective of the eradication of xenophobia, racism and intolerance, it was argued:

‘This initiative should also benefit all these other regional and minority languages, and the bodies created by the Member States to organise participation in the European Year of Languages must also include representatives of these other languages, which are also European...’⁵

Concern was also expressed ⁶ in the Parliament for the survival of those languages spoken throughout Europe ‘which no state accepts and which will never become official’ such as Ladino and Yiddish, languages which also suffered from having no media of their own. Yet financial support for this particular “category” of languages was very unlikely, given the funds allocated in the budget, according to Christa Prets.⁷ Speaking from her experience as coming from a region with three minority languages, this Austrian Member asserted that the funds made available would not even be sufficient ‘as many of you have urged’ to ‘place special emphasis on, and promote, the minority languages’. It was her view that if improved understanding and integration were to be achieved within the European Union then it must first be recognised that languages were an ‘indispensable’ mainstay.

Without doubt, advocates of minority indigenous (or autochthonous) minority languages in the Parliament had a champion in the person of Commissioner Reding – ‘you know how strongly I personally feel about these languages’ – yet she felt compelled to remind Members ‘how sensitive this issue [regional and minority languages] is for certain Member States’:

‘I am relying a great deal, believe me, on the debates that will take place during 2001, the European Year of Languages, because these debates will enable us to overcome the problems and fears which still exist with regard to minority languages. I also hope that at the end of this Year of Languages, their will be no more resistance to languages, because, as has been very clearly stated, there are no small languages, there are only mother tongues, which are all great languages.’⁸

The failure to include minority languages prompted a negative vote on the report on the European Year of Languages from one Member ⁹ because minority and lesser used languages could have ‘contributed important services’ to the success of the Year of Languages initiative.

Five Scandinavian Members from the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left [GUE/NGL] declared that they had abstained from voting ¹⁰ since, in their view, the European Union ought to have been acknowledging how invaluable the very understanding of the importance of language, including minority languages, was ‘beyond the mere one year of the present campaign’. Perhaps significantly, by mid-year, in answer to yet another Question ¹¹ on the subject of the role of regional minority languages would play in plans for the Year of Languages, the Commission’s attitude had ameliorated to some extent for an assertion to be made that the linguistic heritage of Europe would be introduced to citizens ‘without favouring some languages above others’. There was a call ¹² for affirmative action in the form of positive discrimination in favour of regional languages in the broadcasting sector in order to make Europe into ‘a true union of diversities’. This would include broadcasts of all ‘mass events’ such as ceremonies, shows, and sports which would be considered to be of such general interest that they could be enjoyed in all the languages of the European Union, including the regional languages. The same argument that “a good way of favouring diversity is to give particular support to the weaker elements” is well represented in the contemporary academic literature. [See “Support for language ecology policies” in Chapter Two above]

An exchange between an Italian MEP, Michl Ebner,¹³ and the Commission in October, in which the former lamented the steady decrease over five years of the Budget line for minority languages, elicited the now predictable response that the Year of Languages might provide a lasting solution! Ebner had referred in his speech to “Volkgruppen in Europa – Ein Handbuch” in which Christoph Pan lists the tens of minority groups in the European Union and the case argued by Ebner was that European Union enlargement in eastern Europe would make the question of minorities increasingly important.

At the beginning of 2001, a report on electronic publishing highlighted how important the written word was to the development of culture in the regions. The hope was expressed by Eurig Wyn¹⁴ that references to “all languages” in the report included the lesser used languages of Europe because E-publishing was especially important for books with a limited market and ‘academic books and books in lesser-used languages are in this category’. A fortnight earlier, reference to protective measures covering

regional minority languages as part of a text regarding protection for culture and the environment had clearly pleased Luciano Caveri.¹⁵

Hope was similarly expressed ¹⁶ that communication to applicant countries for assistance from European Union agencies should provide for the use of all the Union's languages including regional and minority languages. A further Question from Astrid Thors ¹⁷ concerning the expected impact of the Year of Languages on the position of regional and minority languages precipitated more exchanges between Members of the European Parliament and the Commission in early March. The Commission's position was that money had been set aside for events and projects that would focus exclusively on regional and minority languages and additional contributions were expected from the European Parliament, ¹⁸ which had instigated a study into regional and minority languages. Thors seemed encouraged enough by the Commission's reply to her Question, adding: 'I know that the Commission is aware of the current difficulties when it comes to cooperation on preserving minor languages...'

Commissioner Reding's two slogans ¹⁹ for the Year of Languages – “mother tongue plus two” and “learn your neighbour's language” – brought praise, as did the motives behind them. However, there were reservations as to whether effective action would take place to ‘resolve the various minority situations’, ²⁰ and whether representatives of all languages enjoying official status in a Member State would be able to take part in the organisation of events for 2001.²¹ An observer might have regarded references by the Commissioner to the Charter of Fundamental Rights ²² and by a representative of the Swedish Presidency of the Council to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ²³ as simply attempts to placate Members' concerns. The same representative of the Swedish Presidency of the Council drew attention to action taken by ‘another important institution’, namely the Council of Europe, to produce a convention on the status of minority languages.²⁴ Maybe there was an underlying fear that one or more languages would ‘hold sway over the others’²⁵ so resulting in an increasing ‘discrepancy between major and minor languages’, with the specific difficulties faced by those languages that do not use the Latin alphabet requiring particular attention.

One remedy offered ²⁶ was for European Union delegation staff to speak regional languages ‘so as to maintain a permanent link with the various levels of the local community’ while a call was made to fellow MEPs by Paul Rübig ²⁷ to identify the best existing template or model in existence for bilingualism and multilingualism. The assertion here was that bilingualism and multilingualism constituted an opportunity rather than a problem within the existing Member States. That call was quickly answered, at the time, by Commissioner Kinnock who proudly pointed to the ‘flourishing’ Welsh language co-existing alongside a ‘dominant’ English language:

‘I simply hope that those in the Union who would seek to generate divisions on the basis of different cultural and linguistic origins will be overwhelmed by the majority who enjoy the diversity and treasure the co-existence of cultures within the same community.’ ²⁸

Earlier in the same year, Dutch-speaking Miet Smet²⁹ had, in another context, praised the practice in her homeland of Belgium: ‘In my country, where the two language regions, Dutch and French, should coexist in harmony, we also apply quotas for language proportions.’ If, as was said, ³⁰ respect for language rights was something we must pass on to future generations, then on the same day in Parliament two Spanish Members choosing not to speak in Spanish, both of them belonging to the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance [Verts/ALE], advocated strongly on behalf of their mother tongues and cultures. The expression ‘stateless nation’ ³¹ was used when referring to genuine ‘linguistic roots’ surely entitled to be represented in any convention drawing up proposals for a European Union constitution and discontentment with a ‘makeshift role’.³² (Similar sentiments about the part to be played by linguistic minorities and any proposed European Constitution were articulated later in the year by Caveri ³³ who argued that decisions about any future federalism must take account of aspirations at the regional and local level and the needs of linguistic minorities – not just the wishes of Member States).

On this occasion, the representative of the Belgian Presidency of the Council present was swift to acknowledge that ‘Catalans love their nation, their language and their culture’.³⁴ Yet the next day a statement was issued in the Parliament ³⁵ on behalf of the Union for Europe of the Nations Group [UEN] who were opposed to what they regarded as attempts by the Commission to effectively close the Dublin office of the

Bureau of Lesser Used Languages. It was an office, they argued, which had been very constructive in promoting the protection of such languages in the European Union.

The status of Catalan, ‘spoken by more people, over a wider area, than several of the official languages of the European Union’, was again drawn attention to in the Parliament ³⁶ later in 2001 when the Commission was asked to consider whether the status accorded to Catalan within the institutions of the European Union was in keeping with the Union’s fundamental principle of respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. Allusions were also made to a United Nations sponsored conference held in Durban that urged governments to allow minorities to speak their own language ³⁷ and a day later praise was given to high quality programmes made by public broadcasters in indigenous languages to reflect those indigenous cultures. ³⁸ Ludwig Wittgenstein’s dictum that choosing a language amounted to choosing a form of life was referred to when an assurance was sought ³⁹ from the Commission that greater encouragement would come the way of lesser used languages because ‘it would be a tragedy for Europe if it loses languages such as Scots Gaelic, and Lowland Scots through neglect’. Commissioner Reding earned applause for her response that by having deliberately chosen to answer the Member in Luxembourgish she was, in effect, answering his concerns. On the same day, a statement was requested ⁴⁰ from the Commission as to how the non-official languages could be further developed.

A major debate on minority languages (at the instigation of the PSE Group) and language diversity (at the instigation of the Verts/ALE Group) took place on 13 December 2001. The previous day there had been a clash of views between two Spanish MEPs, who asserted the right to self-determination for Catalonia,⁴¹ and the representative of the Belgian Presidency of the Council present.⁴² The latter made it clear that she did not subscribe to what she described as an attempt to define “regions” as some kind of Member State that somehow ended up not being a Member State. Belgium had found a solution to this sort of problem, the MEPs were told instead.

The major debate itself included bickering between Groups ⁴³ and even sparring over the correct wording to the title of a resolution. Nevertheless, and much more importantly, the debate showed how united Members were in the support of linguistic

diversity, and regional languages in particular. For the Group of the Party of European Socialists [PSE], it was significant that the issue of lesser used languages was a topic for discussion in the Chamber for the first time in eight years.⁴⁴ This very fact, it was contended, illustrated how tenuous the relationship of these languages was with the European Union. The PSE Group wanted money specifically set aside for programmes to promote lesser used languages. For the Verts/ALE Group the matter was clear – linguistic diversity lay ‘at the heart of the fundamental rights’ of citizens, millions of whom spoke an autochthonous language other than the main official language of the state they lived in:

‘Let us work together to ensure that regional and lesser used languages are here to stay and remain part of the culturally diverse Europe of the future. Europe’s unique richness is its diversity. Let us ensure that we all protect this.’⁴⁵

Additional backing for lesser used languages was forthcoming from the Group of the European People’s Party and European Democrats [PPE-DE] who were critical not only of the lack of action by the Commission in this regard during the Year of Languages but also of its (lack of) plans in to the future: ‘Now we hear that the Commission does not intend to do anything about lesser used languages’.⁴⁶ Commissioner Nielson, furthermore, was admonished for choosing to speak in English in the Chamber rather than honouring a lesser used language and speaking his mother tongue, Danish.

Approval of a resolution on regional and minority languages was going to be a cause of satisfaction for eight Catalan Members from five different political Groups⁴⁷ while the Commission and the Council were called on to act decisively and find a permanent legal basis to recognise the ‘equal value and dignity of all European languages’. This was especially so since a bid by Catalan Members for full recognition of their language had not been accepted.⁴⁸ One Member was able to recall the first time Parliament had debated linguistic diversity and lesser used languages; and how at the time MEPs rejoiced in the cultural diversity of Europe because:

‘... our vision of Europe is not a technocratic, bureaucratic or economic project; for us, Europe is, first and foremost, a cultural project, the language diversity of which deserves to be safeguarded.’⁴⁹

There was, said the speaker, a need to guard against the emergence of a standard global “English” language. While urging Members to do all they could to safeguard the regional and lesser used languages of the European Union, he also issued this warning:

‘minorities are obviously set to become either the mortar or the explosive in the foundations of Europe. We are fighting for them to become the mortar of Europe, which is why we support the lesser used languages.’

The number of European Union citizens regularly using a regional or lesser used language was put ⁵⁰ at fourteen million and came with a request that plenary sittings take a ‘specific, targeted and positive approach’ ⁵¹ to the problems these languages were facing. 2001 concluded with the Belgian Presidency of the Council informing Parliament ⁵² that the Convention to formulate a Constitution for the European Union ought to include representatives from “regions with legislative powers” even though some on the Council had found it painful to accept the inclusion of such representatives. Belgium was again used as an example of federalism working well to safeguard different communities speaking different languages from conflict and violence. The announcement produced an ecstatic response from one Member proud to be ‘representing the people of the Valle d’Aosta’ and proud to be an advocate of ‘minority languages and all peoples, great and small’! ⁵³

The claim was made that there were so many languages in Europe that could become official languages if Europe were ‘closer to its people’, ⁵⁴ and one of those would certainly be Basque, if at least one MEP ⁵⁵ had his way, while another would definitely be Catalan! ⁵⁶ For *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, the Republican Left of Catalonia, was expecting, in the name of justice, the Union to recognise its ancient language as an “official” language and as a “working” language of Parliament. ⁵⁷ It was even suggested that an insertion of *seny* (or Catalan common sense) would ‘work wonders’ both at the Council and at the Commission!

The final version of the Lamassoure report on the division of competences between the European Union and Member States, which was adopted in 2002, omitted references, which were present in the initial draft report, to constitutional nationalities and regions. The speaker from the Verts/ALE Group ⁵⁸ ‘which includes

representatives of nations without their own State, such as my country, Galicia' was cut off in "full flight" during the debate. And this after asserting that the report at least encouraged Member States to allow these constitutional nationalities and regions to 'participate in those Union decisions that particularly affect them', with all the implications that had for the promotion of linguistic diversity.

The ten elected regionalist and nationalist Members of the European Free Alliance⁵⁹ were undaunted in trying to exert pressure to achieve what they regarded would be better outcomes for constitutional nationalities and regions in the European institutions, including the application of their perceived linguistic "rights". No opportunity was allowed to slip by as, for example, during a debate on a tax directive on biofuels, when one Spanish Member⁶⁰ asked that the flaws in the French that he was using in the House be excused because his mother tongue was, in fact, Catalan and 'I condemn the fact that ten million citizens are unable to use their own language [Catalan] in this House'. These Members received "moral" support from the likes of a UEN Group Member⁶¹ who availed himself of the occasion of his inaugural speech in the House to say several hundred words of his speech in his native Irish language.

Later in the year, during a debate touching on information policy, regret was expressed⁶² that lesser used languages 'lose out' culturally because European content is not promoted 'in this globalised age'. And during a debate on Ombudsman Söderman's last annual report to Parliament, it was alleged⁶³ that the voluntary Commission code did not recognise that discrimination could be based on language. For his part, the Ombudsman, who was from Finland, concluded his report in his mother tongue Swedish to illustrate that 'Finland is a bilingual country in which the linguistic minority enjoys a high level of protection'.⁶⁴

The Napolitano report on the role of regional and local authorities in the building of Europe was debated in plenary session in the first month of 2003. It was important to those MEPs who were proponents of the greater use of lesser used national languages and the autochthonous regional languages in the European Union, especially as it came at the time the Convention was working on a Constitutional Treaty. These proponents were asking for 'inclusion of linguistic diversity in Europe and the

protection of minority languages’⁶⁵ in the Treaty so that by ‘embracing’⁶⁶ linguistic diversity the understanding of Europe, its peoples and regions, would be enhanced.

The argument presented was that a region is more about its languages, cultures and especially people than it is about its boundaries. And there was a call to give those regions effective autonomy.⁶⁷ It was a matter of the correct application of *subsidiarity* to the regions, an endorsement of what the Italian speaker called the ‘democracy of proximity’. The idea of there being two levels of *subsidiarity* – between the Union and Member States on one hand and between Member States and territorial authorities on the other hand – should be abandoned, was the contention, in favour of one level of *subsidiarity*, that is a ‘direct connection’ between the Union and the territorial authorities. And a Member from yet another Group asserted that if the national language was not the language predominantly used in the education, government and the economy of a region, the inevitable result would be a ‘split between first-class citizens who have grown up with the dominant language from birth and second-class citizens who have merely acquired it’.⁶⁸ The survival of democratic government in Europe was said to rely on the preservation of cultural and regional diversity. This particular Dutch MEP alleged that the existence of the European Union had led to the power of Member State governments expanding at the expense of the power of what is referred to by these advocates, such as him, as “national” parliaments and regions. He cited the examples of Scotland, Catalonia, Friesland, Corsica, Flanders and the Valle d’Aosta – all vibrant areas of lesser used or regional languages – as areas where ‘the people yearn to be put on a more equal footing with the Member States’.

For all those Members who were advocating acknowledgement of an increased role for the lesser used and regional languages the issue was inextricably linked to the wider and “correct” application of the doctrine of *subsidiarity*.⁶⁹

However, this call for greater emphasis to be placed on the role of the regions was a view not shared by all MEPs, particularly from the UEN Group. The UEN Group “pulled no punches”, such as accusing the Parliament of trying to ‘strip the nations of their sovereignty, this time from the bottom’.⁷⁰ The advocates of extended *subsidiarity* were labelled ‘naïve’ in failing to realise that increasing decentralisation would serve only the interests of the bureaucracy in Brussels. Those same advocates

were urged to heed the warning contained in La Fontaine's aphorism: 'It matters not by whom you are eaten, man or wolf, one stomach is much the same as another in this regard; a day earlier or later does not make much difference'! Member States, even though they are the *only members* of the Union, it was asserted, 'would overnight be reduced to playing a secondary role in the building of Europe'⁷¹ and the Napolitano report could not be supported despite containing 'some positive proposals such as the defence of linguistic diversity'.

Nevertheless, judging from the *verbali* of the plenary debates, support for greater emphasis to be placed on the role of the regions was clearly the majority feeling among Members. That majority standpoint is best summed up by the statements of one Dutch representative⁷² that were made to emphasise the importance of both the regional languages and the lesser used languages to citizens of the European Union. Her argument was that language was integral to one's cultural identity and, therefore, a fundamental right, because it was the most important means of communication. To foster its use was to foster regional social cohesion; and, because of this, there must be a legal basis for these languages in the Treaty. Accordingly, she maintained, 'it would be a sin if regional and minority languages were to be lost on account of neglect and suppression'. A *rapporteur*,⁷³ presenting a report that he labelled Parliament's response to the Commission's Communication on an information and communication strategy for the European Union, took up this theme. Information ought to be communicated, he said, not just in the official languages, but also in co-official and regional languages so that 'the message can reach the citizens in the most direct manner'.

The Verts/ALE Group, while in favour of recognising all languages, was adamant that the rights of speakers of 'historic languages'⁷⁴ to use those particular languages in the own regions, 'including as a basis for education', must be formally recognised if a democratic Europe was to flourish. It is worth noting (again), as was explained clearly⁷⁵ to Parliament on a later occasion, that one of the components of this Group, namely the European Free Alliance, represented a wide range of what to their minds were distinct countries within the European Union. Andalusia, the Basque Country, Catalonia, Flanders, Galicia, Scotland and Wales were indeed such "countries", yet with the membership criterion based upon States, these seven "countries"

unfortunately amounted to only three States. Parliament had been told previously that the concept of multinational states ought to apply to sport also, this time by a Member from another Group. Pointing to “national” sports teams representing Scotland and Wales, the Member suggested that Catalonia should be given similar opportunities to participate in official sporting competitions.⁷⁶

In the first week of June 2003, there was an exchange of opinions as part of Question time between MEPs and Commissioner Reding on the subject of minority languages and Union enlargement. Would linguistic minorities whose languages are majority languages in other Member States play any role in the lead up to this enlargement? Moreover, would support currently being provided by a Member State to its language minorities in a country that is a candidate for accession be unlawful after accession?

The Question⁷⁷ referred specifically to the support Germany was giving to the German minority in Poland and to the German minority in the Czech Republic. The detailed response forthcoming from the Commissioner to the issues raised on this occasion was largely a summary of Commission policy to date on regional and lesser used languages, starting with the definition of regional or minority language established by the Council of Europe and subsequently adopted by the Commission. As she pointed out, that definition encompassed many languages that were minority languages in one country but majority languages in another. A related matter in the minds of some Members was whether that definition should be extended to include languages of non-European origin⁷⁸ or whether “migration languages” ought to be kept separate⁷⁹ from the official regional and minority languages. However, the role of “migration languages” is *not* part of the subject matter for this thesis.

There were a number of steps to promote the regional and the lesser used languages that were detailed by the Commissioner in her answer to the Question referred to above. Included in those steps was funding for the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages which had already begun to work on the establishment in the new Member States of national committees representing linguistic minorities, along the lines of similar committees that existed in the [fifteen] Member States. There was also, said the Commissioner, the funding that had been made available for the Mercator research centres, which included measures to provide information on European policy

in the areas in question to the future Members States of the Union. One illustration of this cited by the Commissioner was the Bolzano Conference of 26 and 27 May on the topic 'Best practice in promoting linguistic diversity in an enlarged Europe'. In addition, initiatives were funded through existing programmes such as "Socrates" and "Leonardo da Vinci" that were able to be accessed by all candidate countries.

Other steps detailed were the extension of the *Euromosaic* study on the production and reproduction of the minority language groups in the European Union to the new Member States, as well as public consultations, to which all linguistic minorities, including those whose language was a majority language in other Member States of the enlarged Union, had been invited. The Commission had promoted this last named 'as part of the preparations for an action plan for language diversity and learning', she told the Parliament.⁸⁰

On 4 September 2003, Parliament began debate on a report (referred to from hereon as the Ebner report) from the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport containing recommendations to the Commission on regional and lesser used languages in light of cultural diversity and the impending enlarged membership of the European Union.

The *rapporteur*, a German-speaking Italian MEP from the South Tyrol,⁸¹ extolled the benefits that had accrued to the Austrian minority in his region, speakers of German and Ladin, from the time the European Union first existed. The aim of his report, he told fellow parliamentarians, was to strengthen all languages, whether they were the "official" ones or regional and lesser used. There should be no fear for the continuing identity of any of these languages. In an unusual metaphor, he spoke of his hope that the beautiful mosaic which is Europe might not end up becoming a cocktail. Determined that 'the learning of languages must not be limited to one year, but must become and remain a continuous process', the *rapporteur* presented two proposals: the creation of an Agency on Linguistic Diversity and the adoption of a multi-annual programme for regional and minority languages.

The second speaker in the debate was Commissioner Reding and, not for the first time, there was a gulf between the aspirations of Members, on this occasion from the

Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport, and the Commission's own stance on how those aspirations would be best achieved. Both proposals outlined by the *rapporteur* were not acceptable to the Commission, Parliament was told. While agreeing that the efforts in the field of languages by the Commission and the Council of Europe should be co-ordinated, the Commission's view was that it would be useful to learn the lessons from a feasibility study on the creation of a Cultural Cooperation Observatory already underway 'before embarking upon a new exercise'. As for a multi-annual programme, the Commission viewed an integrated approach to be the best means of promoting regional and minority languages, rather than isolating them in a separate programme. The Commission was all for giving regional and minority languages greater recognition 'by making use of the possibilities provided by the existing programmes'.⁸² Her variety of a mosaic metaphor – 'to turn this grand European linguistic mosaic into a great table for Europe's cultural diversity' – was at least a little easier to understand than the *rapporteur's* version of the mosaic metaphor!

Around twenty different speakers made pertinent points during the debate that followed that day with all but one of the Groups included.⁸³ Among the speeches was one that while being⁸⁴ laudatory of 'Spain's great wealth when it comes to languages' was cautious about channelling more Community money into language promotion when 'we in Spain already channel enough'. The Member's pride was based on the fact that: 'We in the People's Party always try to ensure that one of these co-official languages does not thrive to the detriment of another, for the good of our citizens and in order to have a totally bilingual population'. In support of her argument, she pointed to the regions or Autonomous Communities within Spain where Castilian Spanish was co-official with a language such as Catalan or Basque. However, also from Spain came a different view,⁸⁵ one that lamented the failure of the European Union to recognise Catalan's validity as an "official" language.

The European Parliament was reminded once more that the number of Catalan speakers exceeded that of two of the current official languages and six of the official languages of the candidate countries. The 'failure' referred to was the failure of the Commission to implement requests that had been made by Parliament at the time of the 1990 Reding report. Those particular 1990 requests were that Catalan be

incorporated into the linguistic system of the European Union and that official texts in the Catalan language be ascribed validity so that ‘we will be able to satisfy that plurality which Robert Schuman... spoke of during his lifetime’. What is more, it was contended by a Spanish MEP that the official Council position during the Year of Languages that all languages are equal in dignity was worthless rhetoric if a language such as Catalan continued to be discriminated against.⁸⁶ The cause of and solution to this situation was very apparent to the very determined Member making this pronouncement for, in his own words, it ‘is because we Catalans have not had our own State since Barcelona was taken by the Franco-Spanish armies on 11 September 1714. We therefore know what has to be done. The democratic exercise of the right to self-determination will one day soon resolve our European linguistic problem. I give you my word’. In fact, the European Parliament had published an edition of *Focus on Europe* in the Catalan language for the first time in May 2003. By September of that year 31,000 Catalan speakers had taken out a subscription and the Parliament was told that this amounted to ‘a clear demonstration that it was a positive decision to publish... also in the Catalan language’.⁸⁷

Debate on the Ebner report afforded the opportunity for another Spanish Member to castigate Parliament’s President for not allowing him to speak in Euskera, his own language ‘which, in the opinion of eminent foreign researchers, is the language of the first residents of Europe’.⁸⁸ In a speech echoing the views expounded by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and other academic writers [Refer to Chapter Two above], he maintained that attempts to eliminate languages such as his ‘for the sake of the commercial convenience of uniformity and globalising tendencies’ amounted to real threats to human biodiversity.

The PSE Group renewed their support for maintaining linguistic diversity, as expressed through support for lesser used and minority languages as contributing ‘apart from anything else, to social cohesion, to preventing conflicts’. They did not want a return to the past when lesser used and minority languages were used in a negative fashion to isolate a particular community:

‘... it is commonly accepted that European cultural diversity is closely linked to linguistic diversity, which makes a significant contribution to our very

perception of the world, to expression and creativity... There are in fact millions of Europeans who, alongside the official language of their country, speak a minority language, mainly within their communities, and this is a tradition from generation to generation which we all respect. That is why it is important for cultural ties to be used creatively for the purpose of communication and exchanges...⁸⁹

The sensitiveness of the issue of minority languages in some countries, 'which consider them a threat not only to the integrity of their state culture but also to their territorial integrity'⁹⁰ was raised again in the plenary debates yet the Member who was proud to declare himself a speaker of a minority language [Welsh] and who like many others in the Chamber 'only wanted to live a full life through the medium of our language' said that it was good that minority languages were 'back on the European agenda' since the Commission and the Council 'have dragged their feet... for far too long' on the issue of legal funding for these languages.

Not unexpectedly, as far as the UEN Group was concerned, the area of culture and language policy was regarded as 'primarily a national preserve'⁹¹ yet, perhaps surprisingly, they 'strongly' supported the recommendation contained in the Ebner report to establish a European agency to 'assist the various aspects of language policy'. The UEN Group speaker pointed to his own country of Ireland and to the United Kingdom where in both the 'predominant language is an ever more global English' yet lesser used national languages such as Gaeilge, Scottish Gaelic and Welsh not only survive but also thrive thus providing the evidence that no minority language necessarily has to die out. Reiterating that language was part of 'our very identity', he maintained that Europe was the culturally richer for so many of the autochthonous languages not only having survived, but indeed also still being used daily, in 'this multimedia globalised age'.

The values supported by the Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities [EDD], particularly the values relating to rural issues, were also to be found in the Ebner report according to its spokesperson.⁹² It was accordingly 'vital' to safeguard and promote languages that are part of Europe's heritage because 'they cement peoples and territories and add the specific characteristics and cachet to numerous regions throughout Europe, like here, Alsace or Catalonia – Northern Catalonia – from which I come'. But it was equally vital not to 'rob the Member States of their

power of action in the field of training and culture'. Therefore, rather than establish another agency, the EDD Group preferred that the *subsidiarity* principle be applied and work done much closer to the local level with each Member State encouraged to promote, 'first and foremost', the learning of regional and minority languages from nursery school onwards.⁹³ It was considered by the EDD Group to be essential that all Member States ratify the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

A speaker from among the NI Group regretted that the Ebner report had left the Commission to define the terms "regional language" and "minority language" when it was, in his opinion, 'precisely our role to determine these criteria',⁹⁴ despite which he could not challenge the emphasis that the report placed on the value of these languages. The definition of these terms – "regional language" and "minority language" – was problematic, yet a distinction had to be made: 'we must ensure that there is no artificial reconstruction of abstract languages that are removed from the regional realities. We must ensure that we do not establish a restrictive and authoritarian system'. Into which category might the German spoken in Alto Adige, South Tyrol or Alsace fall, and does the langue d'oc in the south of France constitute a "regional language", or should that term be more properly reserved for its distinct components, Provençal or Gascon, the Member pondered.

A positive view of what had gone before and what would come in the future was certainly evident in the plenary debate. Linguistic diversity was widely recognized as being integral to European heritage, and this recognition was reinforced by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which would inevitably become part of any European Constitution. Funding had been assigned in the annual budgets for more than twenty years to stimulate the teaching and learning of languages, culminating in the Year of Languages. The momentum gained during the Year of Languages in 2001 was continuing, and indeed needed to continue. A plan of action would 'hammer home' that there is 'still a great deal left to be done in this area'.⁹⁵ Linguistic diversity had to be seen for what it really was – the key that would open up 'respect for, and understanding of, people from a different culture'. The end result of this would, according to the Dutch Member, be peace in Europe, which was, of course, the very reason for the formation of the European Union in the first place.

Other noteworthy contributions to the debate in a similar optimistic vein were made by the Austrian Christa Prets ('Being myself from... a country in which six recognised ethnic groups and their minority languages are represented – three of them, including Roma, in my very small federal state of Burgenland alone')⁹⁶ and by Mathieu Grosch ('Belonging as I do to the German speaking community in Belgium, I can see that respecting this is not a luxury for those regions that enjoy autonomy, but something I regard as a European fundamental right').⁹⁷

The Ebner report promised proactive help and hope was expressed by one Member whose own ancestral languages, Gaelic and Lowland Scots, had suffered 'severe discrimination and neglect'⁹⁸ that the Commission would indeed put into effect that promise. What had happened to the languages spoken in Argyllshire and Ayrshire over centuries and, in fact, in other parts of Scotland was symptomatic of 'a universal European problem'. Support was voiced in Parliament for a relevant agency on linguistic diversity and language learning to be established as one of the practical efforts to make things happen for minority languages, provided, of course, that sufficient resources were allocated for it to function effectively. There had been, it was claimed, almost insurmountable problems during the fifth parliamentary term, 'whenever we have tried to steer funds from the Union's budget in the direction of minority languages'.⁹⁹ This proposed agency in addition to the Commission's intended requirement for universities to review their language policies 'so that English is not so dominant' were seen as a steps in the right direction.¹⁰⁰

However, the assertion was made during the plenary debate that dealing with the problem of 'the institutionalisation, the status and the function' of "national" languages, such as Catalan, which were not state languages was indeed going to be the litmus test in 'deciding whether the policy of a future European agency for linguistic diversity or the policy on the European institutions is really going to be faithful to the slogan of the future constitutional Union: united in diversity'.¹⁰¹

Parliament was reminded of the 'immensity of this issue in quantitative terms'.¹⁰² With the accession of the new Member States, Hungarians in Slovakia, Germans and Poles in the Czech Republic, Poles in Lithuania, and Lithuanians in Poland were just some examples of the large number of minorities and ethnic groups who will become

part of an enlarged Union. And the issue would be qualitative too in so far as ‘these minorities can become either the mortar in the foundations of the European Union or an explosive charge. We want them to be the mortar that holds us together.’ The reason is simple: people living on the other side of the state border that separates them from those who speak the same language were at risk of becoming second-class citizens; ¹⁰³ indeed, it was claimed, already within the European Union a ‘stark contrast’ was beginning ‘to emerge between peoples who now have their own Member State and peoples who are treated as minorities within states that predominantly speak a different language’. This reality amounted to a recipe for major conflicts unless a solution was found soon to situations such as that facing Catalan speakers who will ‘continue to wonder why their language counts for less than the much smaller languages of the Danes, Finns, Baltic peoples and Slovenians’. There was also represented in the debate, it must be said, those who were weighed down with the feeling of gloom and pessimism, believing that linguistic diversity was being ‘destroyed’ in Europe.¹⁰⁴

The imminent accession of ten new countries on 1 May 2004 was a continuing issue, late in September 2003, for those Members of the European Parliament ‘who dream of a truly united Europe of regions and peoples’ ¹⁰⁵ in which the diversity of languages and cultures would be recognised within each Member State. The fact that some of the soon-to-be Member States would be smaller than regions such as Catalonia, Flanders, Scotland and Wales was a continuing source of irritation to some in the Parliament. Essentially the underlying cause of discontent was that the ‘peoples of Europe who are identifiable as stateless nations, or [who are] in regions with a strong personality and sense of identity’ ¹⁰⁶ were being denied the guarantees necessary ‘to associate the regions with full legislative powers with the European institutions’. Those “powers” had to mean *inter alia* the inclusion of those regional languages that are official in the Member States into the ‘linguistic system of languages’ of the European Union. Such was the argument of Carles-Alfred Gasòliba i Böhm who believed that there was no guarantee that the Catalan language – despite the fact that it was going to be the eighth most widely-spoken language in the enlarged European Union – would achieve official recognition. While acknowledging the inclusion of principles ‘which we believe to be very important’ relating to linguistic and cultural diversity (as well as the inclusion of the principle of

subsidiarity for the regions) in the proposed European Constitution, nevertheless the Catalan Members from *Convergència i Unió* felt that they had to abstain from voting on the proposed Constitution.

Very similar sentiments were expressed by another self-styled ‘Member from Catalonia, a stateless nation’ who lamented that the proposed Constitution did not provide for the incorporation ‘of those languages which have official status in part of the territory of a Member State, as in the case of Catalan’ ¹⁰⁷ into the European Union linguistic system.

The demands of the so-called “regionalists” were labelled ‘a model of moderation’ ¹⁰⁸ since demands such as equal language rights and the option of internal enlargement were eminently reasonable in light of Europe’s history. After all, “nations” such as Catalonia would not be able to contribute ‘fully’ to Europe so long as the Convention on the proposed Constitution adhered rigidly to ‘the philosophy of the Treaty of Westphalia and the concept of the nation state’. Catalonians, had said the Member, been Europeans ever since the days of Charlemagne! The feeling certainly did exist among some of the elected representatives, including some who supported the draft Constitution at the time, that among the measures ‘fundamental to unifying the peoples of Europe’ ¹⁰⁹ was the establishment of a language system ‘which includes all the official languages of each Member State’.

The drive to include Catalan, in particular, as an official language did not let up at all in 2003 and every opportunity to advocate for “peoples” as opposed to “citizens” was taken advantage of. Typical of this approach was that adopted by Miquel Mayol i Raynal during a debate on the *Erasmus Mundus* programme. After praising the possibilities *Erasmus Mundus* possessed to further enhance understanding between peoples, he chose to dwell on this word “peoples”:

‘Yes, peoples: I did say peoples because I note that these days, unfortunately, it is the fashion to talk about citizens and to forget about peoples... I belong to a people, the Catalan people, which does not necessarily coincide with the French and Spanish states... I think it is desirable for all European languages to enjoy equal rights, not only in these *Erasmus Mundus* programmes, but also in all of the European institutions.’ ¹¹⁰

In what could be interpreted as a lighter moment, one Member was prepared not to ‘begrudge’ Corsicans ‘who speak a language other than French’ ¹¹¹ greater autonomy or even the right of secession from France but drew the line at allowing Corsicans to continue keeping the price of cigarettes artificially low for consumers and tourists on the island!

The opportunity for the Commission to reiterate its commitment to the lesser used languages came in response to a Question ¹¹² seeking information on the Commission’s promotion of media in the minority languages. The Commission considered that the financing of the *Mercator* network – the information network for regional and minority languages in the European Union – including the *Mercator* Media centre, as well as eighty per cent funding of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, including the press agency *EUROLANG*, clearly pointed to their commitment in this area. The Commission reply also cited the establishment of the European portal “Lingualia” for regional and minority languages in Europe as well as the extension to the *Euromosaic* study to research the position of such languages in those countries seeking admission as Member States in 2004 as providing further evidence of their commitment.

My assessment of the mood evident in the plenary debates of 2003, and indeed throughout the fifth parliamentary term, surrounding the importance of regional and minority autochthonous languages is well summed up by the words of Michl Ebner. ¹¹³ Speaking in the context of ensuring continued funding for both the European Bureau for Lesser Used languages and *Mercator*, Ebner declared: ‘I believe that this House has, recently, been consistent about this, and that it is taking the lead, and I hope that the Commission... will continue to do so by way of the languages action plan and will demonstrate in practice the further commitment that Parliament has demanded’.

In conclusion, what were the matters important to those MEPs who participated in the those plenary debates on the issues related to regional and minority languages and Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, namely that the European Union ‘shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity’? The supply of adequate funds for spending on promoting regional and minority languages was a key concern

with frustration expressed that funds allocated up to this point had been inadequate. Allied with this concern was uneasiness that there were no plans yet put in place for the promotion of such languages in to the future. The benefits to the wider European Union of such promotion were seen as twofold. Firstly, there would be a consequential awareness of cultural diversity, the existence of such awareness inevitably leading to a reduction in xenophobia, racism and intolerance. With these problems in decline, the second principal benefit would emerge in the form of greater social cohesion and the likelihood of a more successful integration of speakers of these indigenous languages into the European Union community.

‘Mr President, it is true that, before we start giving lectures, we should take a look at ourselves. When I say ‘we’, I mean the Member States. For example, could a State which today refuses to ratify the European Charter of Linguistic Rights join Europe?’ – Miquel Mayol i Raynal (ESP)

The first theme addressed in this Chapter indicates that there was widespread support among the Members of the European Parliament for the promotion of indigenous regional and minority languages, in theory at any rate. That support came from across the political spectrum with really only Members of the UEN Group expressing any serious reservations as to the negative effect that promotion of indigenous regional and minority languages might have on preserving the importance of national languages within Member States. Allied with these reservations were some fears expressed that by promoting regional languages there was a danger that separatism was also being promoted with its consequential threat to the territorial cohesion and integrity of an individual Member State. However, with regard to the views expressed by some UEN MEPs, it must be acknowledged once again that that particular Group did oppose moves to curtail the working of the Dublin office of the Bureau of Lesser Used Languages in light of the success that office had enjoyed in the promotion and protection of those languages under its watch.¹¹⁴

Yet while this support for indigenous regional and minority languages was evident in the plenary debates, what reaction was there to the speeches and written declarations

made by individual Members of the European Parliament or by clusters of Members (not necessarily all from the same Political Grouping) that were critical, or even condemnatory, of actions by governments in their own countries with regard to the opportunity to use these indigenous languages within their own countries or within the institutions of the European Union? Were the criticisms referred to widespread or were they confined essentially to the actions (or, indeed, the lack of action) by only a very few Member State governments? To what extent did representatives of the Commission or the Council lend support to Members who were critical (or condemnatory) of the way these indigenous languages were being treated in existing Member States, as perceived by the Members concerned? Were Members of Parliament encouraged by the responses given by representatives of the Council and the Commission on this issue and was there, during the fifth parliamentary term, a prevailing mood of optimism that a resolution to these issues was in sight?

Spanish MEPs of different “nationalities” and from different Groups clashed regularly during the fifth parliamentary term on the degree of linguistic rights extended to those “nationalities” within their own country. On occasions, the clashes were triggered by the activities of the nationalist separatist organisation Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) – Basque for “Basque Homeland and Freedom”. Such an example occurred in September 2000. Prompted by a reference during the debates to the threat ETA posed to freedom, whatever a person’s language, a Galician condemned the lack of dialogue between the Spanish and Basque governments.¹¹⁵ Another Member¹¹⁶ claimed that problems had their roots in the failure of Spanish democrats to accept that ‘the Basque Country has the right to its own identity in Europe’. The same speaker believed it was nothing short of a travesty for a European Union Summit held at Biarritz in the Basque country to announce a declaration of fundamental rights for European citizens ‘whilst the most elementary rights of the Basque people, namely language and self-administration, are thoroughly denied’.¹¹⁷ And the same Member took the opportunity a few months later, while talking about Zapatista supporters marching in Mexico to campaign for legal status for their indigenous language, to once again draw attention to the Spanish government’s ‘new aggressive bid to crack down on Basque independence campaigners’.¹¹⁸ With regard to the announcement of a declaration of fundamental rights, candidates for membership of the European Union were bluntly advised to ignore Commission speeches on corruption when ‘there is not one

European Union Member State that is in a position to preach to you’¹¹⁹ on the matter of human rights.

A Question¹²⁰ directed to the Commission early in 2001 targeted the situation of minority languages and multiannual programmes intended for those languages ‘so that decisions in favour of minorities or minority languages could no longer be blocked by individual Member States, as has frequently been the case in the past’. The Commission response was effectively to draw on Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Yet, as was pointed out in the Parliament three weeks later, the European Union Summit held in Nice did not “approve” that Charter, leaving many European citizens ‘with a bad taste in our mouths’ as a result. That speaker continued:

‘I do not know why the representatives of the Member States’ governments did not want to approve it. But the fact is that I asked a question on a concrete case of human rights, relating to the use of Euskera [Basque] – the so-called *lingua navarrorum* – in the Autonomous Community of Navarre, and the Commission replied that as language rights are a subject not in force in the Charter of Human Rights at a European level, complaints can only be made at the level of national institutions and courts. I should like to ask you if you agree with this kind of explanation or whether we European citizens have a right to greater protection by the European institutions.’¹²¹

Resorting to semantics as a defence in his reply, the representative of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of Ministers claimed that the Charter ‘has been solemnly proclaimed’ and that the Council of Europe’s Convention on Human Rights protected the status of minority languages anyway.¹²² A reply such as this was not likely to placate Members who believed that minority indigenous languages were being discriminated against in a Member State. Therefore, it was not surprising, a month later, that the efficacy of the ‘solemn proclamation’ delivered in Nice was tested in the Parliament by two Questions¹²³ again relating to the use of Basque in the civil service of the Spanish regional government of Navarre.

One Question from the Dutch-speaking Belgian Bart Staes on 5 April 2001 asked how the Navarre law restricting the use of Euskari was compatible with the aims of the Year of Languages. The other Question on the same day from Spaniard Josu Ortuondo Larrea, a Member of the same political grouping as Staes, alluded to the

‘solemn proclamation’ in Nice of Article 21(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights whereby ‘any discrimination based on any ground such as language ... shall be prohibited’ and asked what ‘urgent measures’ the Commission intended ‘to take to ensure that human rights are respected in Navarre.

The answer given to these Questions highlighted a crucial (and confusing) distinction that existed between the European Union and the Member States when it came to a matter of ‘enforcing’ provisions of a Charter such as that on Fundamental Rights. The European Union did not have the “competence” in this particular case to enforce provisions because the Charter applied only to the institutions and bodies of the European Union itself and to the Member States when European Union law was being implemented. Because the decrees of the Navarre autonomous community government did not constitute the implementation of European Union law, the only remedy available for the aggrieved parliamentarians was to direct their case to the institutions and courts within Spain itself.

The Members of the European Parliament were left wondering what real protection they were afforded by provisions of the Charter within their own country. Was the distinction relied upon in this instance merely a convenient way for the European Union to avoid an unpleasant confrontation with a Member State or was it for the very purpose of allowing existing member countries to make their own rules regarding the extent of linguistic diversity within their territory? Certainly, the “official” interpretation did absolutely nothing to diminish the resolve of some to achieve self-determination and an ‘individual personality’¹²⁴ for the Basque people.

The users of Basque, however, were not the only ones who felt discriminated against. Parliament was told that in the Italian region of Padania people whose mother tongue was Piedmontese or Veneto did not have the right to be taught in their mother tongue at school.¹²⁵ The case made by Mario Borghezio in this instance was that, in order for there to be genuine freedom to speak one’s own language, it was necessary for succeeding generations of the region’s citizens to be educated in the cultural context of the region concerned. This would only occur when the traditions and history of that minority were to be included in school curricula in to the future. And the Commission was not the only target of a Member’s wrath on the language issue in 2001. President-

in-Office of the Belgian Presidency of the Council Guy Verhofstadt was on the receiving end of a quite vitriolic personal attack from one Dutch speaking Belgian Member for being ‘the once pro-Flemish politician who refused to protect the Dutch language’.¹²⁶

Early in 2002, a Question in Parliament broached the issue of the allegedly token supply of broadcasts emanating from French television channels to the Catalan and Basque speaking inhabitants of southern France.¹²⁷ The matter was raised in the Chamber because of the impending end to the preferential conditions under which Spanish television broadcasts in Catalan (TV3 and Canal 33) and Basque (Euskaltelebista) were made available to Catalan and Basque speakers. It was claimed that the cessation of these conditions would result in a breach of the rule enshrined in Article 22 of the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights concerning respect for cultural and linguistic diversity. The Commission responded that Member States were required to ensure freedom of reception on their territory of television broadcasts from other Member States, this in accordance with Article 22, and so the matter would consequently be taken up with the French authorities.

An exchange took place during Question Time¹²⁸ in that year over the failure of the Spanish government, which had taken over the revolving Presidency of the Council of Ministers from the beginning of 2002, to include Catalan, Galician and Basque – all languages co-official with Spanish – on its Presidency website and in its appearances before, and dealings with, the European Parliament. The representative of the Spanish Presidency reminded Members of Parliament that ‘the linguistic system of the Community’s institutions will be set by the Council, which will decide unanimously’ and so only eleven languages were official languages.¹²⁹ Accordingly, the presence of languages that were declared as “official” by virtue of the Spanish Constitution on the Presidency website was not an issue which came within the jurisdiction of the Council of the European Union. The Questioner was not satisfied by this answer and further questioned why the Spanish government had not allowed Asturian, Catalan, Galician, Basque and other indigenous Spanish languages ‘to be promoted or cared for’ during the Year of Languages.¹³⁰ Again the representative of the Spanish Presidency of the Council asserted that the matters raised were those properly belonging to the internal affairs of a Member State and not the affairs of the Council of the European Union:

‘I am afraid that the honourable Member has mistaken this forum for another. I believe that your parliamentary group would do better to raise this question in the Spanish Parliament. I repeat that the Council of the Union is not involved in this issue in any way whatsoever. Therefore, since I am appearing here in the European Parliament as a representative of the Council of the Union, and not of the Spanish Government, I cannot answer your question.’¹³¹

There was a perception that one rule applied to candidate countries for accession and another rule applied to countries already Member States. Otherwise, how could a country that refused to ratify the European Charter of Linguistic Rights join the European Union?¹³²

The apparent reluctance of the European Union to censure, let alone take decisive action against, Member States for what individual Members of Parliament or whole Political Groups considered breaches of the principles of linguistic diversity within those countries left the aggrieved frustrated and feeling powerless. A view such as that ‘in Europe there are entire peoples, groups and linguistic and religious minorities who, even within Member States that declare themselves protectors of the values of freedom, do not enjoy any protection at all as regards these fundamental rights’¹³³ was aired in the Chamber. This despite the knowledge that Parliament was severely restricted in being able to effect any changes sought. So what avenues were left open to MEPs who were dissatisfied with the status quo in their own countries? One strategy was to continue the appeal to Parliament for the Parliament to acknowledge that the rights of linguistic minorities were indeed being breached in specific cases. A clear example of this strategy was the speech delivered by Miquel Mayol i Raynal:

‘I wish to inform you of the concerns of all those in the Republic of France who fight for the survival of indigenous languages. As you know, France has not yet ratified the European Convention on Human Rights, unfortunately, and recent decisions adopted by the Council of State have condemned the intensive teaching of indigenous languages and equal teaching in state education, in state schools. These decisions are extremely serious because they undermine more than 20 years of work by campaigners of linguistic causes such as Breton and Alsatian.’¹³⁴

His appeal had been made to ‘the common sense of our Members’ in an effort to ensure the continuation of the experiment being conducted in bilingual schools in Alsace. Similarly, the French government was alleged to be in breach of two Articles

of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which Parliament had been assured was ‘solemnly proclaimed’ in Nice, by detaining some citizens in Bayonne for merely putting up a sign at the local railway station in Euskara, the Basque language.¹³⁵ The sign itself merely read BAIONAKO GELTOKIA, which translated meant Bayonne railway station. In this instance, the representative of the Danish Presidency of the Council¹³⁶ was able once again to draw the distinction between action taken by national authorities on the one hand and action taken by national or European Union authorities in the administration of European Union policy on the other hand. Because the European Union had no policy on railway signage, the conduct of the French authorities could not be regarded as a breach of the Charter, according to the Council.

The same incident regarding the sign at the railway station was also the subject of a Question directed to the Commission, on this occasion¹³⁷ emphasising that Euskara was simply being used ‘in its place of origin where its use predates that of French’. It was claimed, by the Member asking the Question, that Basque citizens were having their language suppressed when they were entitled to be provided with all public signs in their vernacular language. Failure to provide public signs in the vernacular amounted to discrimination on grounds of language. However, the Commission was no more receptive to the complaint than the Council had been. The Commission’s interpretation of Articles in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, such as ‘the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity’ (22) and ‘any discrimination based on any ground such as... language... [and] membership of a national minority... shall be prohibited’ (21(1)), was that the Articles applied to Member States only when Member States were implementing European Union law.

The same MEP also complained¹³⁸ about another action he attributed to the French government, which had occurred a fortnight later, namely the French Council of State’s approval of a resolution declaring illegal the integration into the French public network of Diwan schools that taught the autochthonous Breton language. He contended that since the Charter of Fundamental Rights had been ‘so pompously proclaimed’ in Nice by President Chirac and the former President of the European Parliament, Nicole Fontaine, surely the French Government had an obligation under that Charter to legally guarantee public access to the learning of these other native

European languages within their respective territory. The representative of the Danish Presidency of the Council of Ministers, while expressing his support for regional languages, which he believed ‘have a future’,¹³⁹ simply re-iterated that provisions in the Charter concerning linguistic diversity applied to European Union policies and not to the policies of individual Member States.

There was no let up whatsoever in 2003 by those MEPs who were committed to effecting change in the way the indigenous minority languages were treated in their own countries, and Spain was again the principal target. There was denunciation for the shutting down of *Egunkaria*, the only daily newspaper entirely published in Euskara, ‘the language not just of the Basques, but – according to the most prestigious experts – the primitive language of the Europeans’.¹⁴⁰ The Member alleged that combined action by the Spanish Minister for Internal Affairs and a National High Court judge had been taken against the newspaper ‘simply because it defends the right of Basques to their own identity and to use their own language’. Parliament’s President may have thought that the Member’s ‘point was well made’, but another Spanish MEP,¹⁴¹ from a different Group, refuted the charges, claiming that ‘we are not talking about an issue of language’, but of the management of the newspaper being in the control of a terrorist organisation.

Nevertheless, the same allegation against the Spanish authorities was repeated in the Chamber some weeks later by another protagonist for regional languages.¹⁴² It was this particular Member¹⁴³ who declared to a plenary session of Parliament that he had abstained on votes concerning the accession of ten new Member States, ‘even though my colleagues in the European Free Alliance are in favour’. His reasons included what he regarded as the failure of the Convention on a constitution for the European Union to promote ‘the cause of Catalan becoming an official language at European level’. More frustration directed at the Spanish authorities was aired in Parliament when the Basque national institution *Udalbitza*, among whose stated aims was the promotion of the Euskara language, was banned – ‘Can anyone say what the European Union is waiting for before it reacts?’¹⁴⁴

The same advocates for autochthonous languages were active in Parliament during the second half of 2003, even creating a platform for their cause when none existed. An

example was a Question, ¹⁴⁵ prompted by the Spanish authorities having shut down the only Basque newspaper, *Egunkaria*, asking for reasons why Euskara could not enjoy the same minor status as Catalan enjoyed. The Questioner was referring to a resolution of the European Parliament from 1989 that acknowledged the special position of Catalan among the minority languages and urged the Commission to publish a number of ‘fundamental texts’ in Catalan.

The inquiry was ruled, not unexpectedly, not to be supplementary to a question on violence at football grounds! The procedure of a point of order was used by Josu Ortuondo Larrea ¹⁴⁶ ‘to vigorously condemn and protest against the anti-democratic and illegal abuse I have received from Mr Pat Cox, President of Parliament, who has refused to include in this part session two questions which I have presented in relation to two possible violations’ of human rights. The alleged violations included a law passed that forbade Basque prisoners from studying and sitting examinations at the Public University of the Basque Country, the only university in Spain that provided education in Euskara. The Member repeated his objections to the refusal to allow prisoners to study in their mother tongue and to the closing down of *Egunkaria* in a speech in the plenary session three months later ¹⁴⁷ to the scorn of another representative from his own country. The latter ¹⁴⁸ accused the particular Member of being more concerned for ETA prisoners than for the victims of terrorism and that all Basque citizens should accordingly be wary of what the Member said and wrote. Was this retort merely an attempt to divert attention away from the substance of the complaint by the use of an *ad hominem* strategy? One might fairly come to that conclusion because Josu Ortuondo Larrea told Parliament that he belonged to and represented the Basque Nationalist Party, which had been governing the Basque Country continuously for more than twenty years. It is a party which, said Ortuondo, ‘firmly rejects and condemns the use of violence and terror as instruments to achieve any political objective’. Furthermore, he re-affirmed this stance by declaring: ‘I will never put the rights of violent people before the rights of others.’ ¹⁴⁹

The major debate on regional and lesser used languages in connection with enlargement and cultural diversity (debate on the Ebner report), which took place on 4 September 2003 and already referred to elsewhere in this thesis, provided further opportunity for Members to highlight how integral the right to use one’s own

language was to rights of freedom. The report being debated illustrated how these rights could be violated, it was claimed,¹⁵⁰ when in his address the *rapporteur* mentioned his region *Südtirol* only to have it translated incorrectly by what he termed ‘the bureaucratic name fixed by the Italian centralist State’ as *Alto Adige*. The Non-attached Member concluded, speaking in his mother tongue of Piedmontese, by asserting that his own language together with the Ladin and Walser languages, that were also spoken in Val d’Aosta, continued to suffer to that day from what he described as ‘serious oppression by the centralist Italian State’.¹⁵¹ This was justification, according to the speaker, for engaging in the struggle to obtain federalism in Italy without delay, and for demanding ‘full freedom and independence for our lovely region of Piedmont and for a free Padania’.

A representative of the PPE-DE Group, Michael Gahler, continued this theme in a more moderate but no less emphatic tone. There was generally present in Member States (and the ten candidate countries), he said, ‘a repressive reflex towards minorities and their languages’¹⁵² that arose out of history. He did acknowledge pockets in Europe that provided exceptions, such as eastern Belgium and south Tyrol, where multilingualism could not only be heard but also be seen, with resulting enrichment. He was certain that ‘there are no separatist or extremist languages’ – it is only people who can be separatist or extremist – which explains ‘why linguistic minorities as such cannot be generally suspected of imperilling the unity of the nation by using their language’. For this reason, he found it ‘incomprehensible’ that the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities had not been ratified by *all* Member States. Since ratification of the Charter and the Framework Convention would not pose a threat to the national unity or territorial integrity of Member States, the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from non-ratification was that those countries that fell into this category ‘believe it self-evident that their own language and culture can only be safeguarded by restricting others rather than through their own attractiveness.’ In his speech, Gahler referred to his German-speaking Belgian colleague Mathieu Grosch as representing linguistic minorities in the PPE-DE Group. The latter MEP’s contribution to this particular plenary debate was discussed in Chapter Four above.

The effects over centuries wrought by the hegemony of a large multicultural state's dominant language, the language of the capital and of the business and military elite, had surfaced earlier during the fifth parliamentary term. On that occasion,¹⁵³ the theory put forward (a theory also well represented in the contemporary academic literature¹⁵⁴) was that the dominant protected language was spoken by the rich whereas workers and farmers continued to speak their own national languages. This became the basis for linguistic conflict, the emergence of 'rich and poor, powerful and powerless, winners and losers' and, inevitably, the disintegration of these very large states. So it was predicated that, unless future generations are to be divided between the privileged and the underprivileged, the equality of languages must be defended. Europe was not like America where, according to the Member, 'migrants who all live in one and the same community yet speak different languages by origin' had to adopt the official language in order to be able to communicate with one other.

It was made clear to Parliament, however, that the Council of Europe's Framework did not enjoy the support of the Flemish Government in Belgium or the representatives of the *Vlaams Blok* in Parliament because 'French-speaking Belgians who have moved to Flanders want to misuse it in order to have French recognised as an official language in Flanders'.¹⁵⁵ This strategy on the part of French-speaking Belgians was in contravention of Belgium's language laws that are based on the principle of territoriality and 'mainly concerns people who refuse to fit in with the Dutch speaking character of the region, and who, in fact, turn failure to teach another language – in this case Dutch – into a political point of debate'.

Six weeks later, another Dutch speaking *Vlaams Blok* Flemish MEP, again representing Belgium, also drew attention to what he considered the perilous position of his mother tongue. Describing his native Flanders as one of the smallest "nations" in the European Union, he drew attention to Dutch, 'our language', repeatedly being under threat within the universities because an increasing number of courses, not only in Flanders, but also in the Netherlands, are being taught exclusively in English'.¹⁵⁶

One of the Spanish MEPs¹⁵⁷ seized the opportunity, not surprisingly, during the debate on the Ebner report to push for all the official languages of Member States to be added to the list of official languages of the European Union. Referring in

particular to the situation of Catalan with its so many millions of speakers, he castigated Spanish Governments for not having championed the official languages recognised by the country's Statutes of Autonomy and called on the European Union to recognise and protect these languages 'over and above the positions of governments'. After all, the European Parliament had recognised, in the Reding report, that Catalan deserved 'special treatment given its importance and standing at the heart of the European Union'. Moreover, equally unsurprisingly, towards the end of 2003 there was voiced yet another condemnation of Spanish authorities, this time for 'a new round of repression aimed at the two main pillars of Basque society: its language and culture' ¹⁵⁸ with the arrest of 'eight prestigious members of the Basque cultural world'. The very 'defencelessness of those working to promote the Basque language and culture' was evidence for all to see of the 'authoritarian character' of what was referred to as the so-called 'young Spanish democracy'.

Twelve key actors took part in the plenary debates during the fifth parliamentary term claiming that regional and minority indigenous languages were being discriminated against and denied what was termed their 'elementary' rights. These actors effectively adopted the role of "activists" in the Parliament on behalf of these languages. Three were from Spain: Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso, Miquel Mayol i Raynal and Josu Ortuondo Larrea. The first named was a non-attached Member while the others were from the Verts/ALE Group. Four of the "activists" were from Belgium; significantly, they were mother tongue Dutch speakers: Philip Claeys, Karel Dillen, Bart Staes, and Frank Vanhecke. All but Staes, who was from the Verts/ALE Group, were non-attached. There were two Italians: the non-attached Member, Mario Borgezio and Michl Ebner from the PPE-DE Group. Also from the PPE-DE Group came the moderating influence in the debates of the German, Michael Gahler. Another non-attached Member was Bruno Gollnisch representing France. The Dutch Member, Erik Meijer, although belonging to the Socialistische Partij in the Netherlands was one of the Verts/ALE Group. What is significant is the political parties they belonged to in their own countries. Many of these parties' names resonate with regional pre-occupations and regional loyalty: Lega Nord per l'indipendenza della Padania (Borgezio), Südtiroler Volkspartei (Partito popolare sudtirolese) (Ebner), Euskal Herriarrok (Gorostiaga), Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Mayol i Raynal),

Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Ortuondo), Vlaams Belang or Vlaams Blok (Claeys, Vanhecke and Dillen).

Invariably, the “fight” on behalf of the regional or minority language was also a struggle for the independence and freedom of the territory where that language was spoken. So, in Borghezio’s case, as indicated above, it was a matter of self-determination for ‘our lovely region of Piedmont and for a free Padania’. For Ortuondo and Gorostiaga, for example, self-determination for the Basque country was inextricably linked with the campaign to give greater “rights” to Euskara, the language.

The advocates of Catalan alluded to cultural “enslavement” during the twentieth century military dictatorship in Spain led by the nationalist Francisco Franco. The regions concerned were frequently referred to by their advocates as a “country”, a “nation” or a “stateless nation”, not simply a region. Supporters of the Basque language in the Parliament were forced to contend with accusations that they were also supporters of terrorism also under the banner of ETA.

Typical of these accusations were those emanating from Gerardo Galeote and Jorge Salvador Hernández Mollar, both members of the Partido Popular in Spain and both part of the PPE-DE Group in the European Parliament. Of course, it was not so easy for would-be opponents to similarly dismiss the claims made on behalf of Catalan, Galician, Breton, Flemish, or Piedmontese. And, anyway, as made clear above, Michael Gahler was at pains to emphasise that the PPE-DE Group did support the aspirations of linguistic minorities. In his carefully crafted address, he had begun by drawing attention to the different treatment afforded Letzeburgesh in the Parliament from that afforded Welsh or Basque. In the case of Letzeburgesh, ‘you [Commissioner Reding] would probably not have had to submit your speech beforehand. We would have had it translated for us.’ He continued by pointing to the ‘visible multilingualism’ apparent in Eastern Belgium and South Tyrol as something ‘not yet achieved in this Parliament building, where what we can read is in one single language’. His conclusion was that regional and minority languages were not of themselves ‘separatist or extremist’.¹⁵⁹

The principal strategy adopted by those MEPs who believed that the rights of speakers of indigenous regional and minority languages were being breached in their own countries was to continue to draw Parliament's attention to these breaches and to ask the Parliament to acknowledge that the breaches were, in fact, happening. Parliament's attention was sought not only by way of speeches and written declarations but also by way of Questions and Points of Order. This strategy was effectively all that was left available to these Members. This was because both the Council and the Commission were insistent that complaints could be made only at the level of national institutions and courts unless the discrimination complained of actually occurred within the institutions of the European Union or the institutions of a Member State when European Union law itself was being implemented.

What then, in summary, can one draw from the exchanges between MEPs and representatives of the Commission and of the Council on this topic during the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term? First and foremost, unpalatable as it was to the advocates for greater "ascendancy" for regional and minority languages, Members had to accept that there was a distinction to be drawn between action taken by national authorities on the one hand and action taken by national or European Union authorities in the administration of European Union policy on the other hand. Secondly, provisions in the Charter of Fundamental Rights regarding linguistic diversity were deemed to apply to European Union policies, not to the policies of individual Member States. In other words, the Charter of Fundamental Rights only applied to Member States when those States were actually implementing European Union law. However, Article 21(1) of that Charter –

‘Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, *language*, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited’ [My emphasis]

was taken from Article 14 of the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms –

‘The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, *language*, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status’ [My emphasis]

and in those Member States where the Convention had been ratified – as, for example in the case of Spain (1979) – direct appeals should be made by aggrieved Members of Parliament to the national courts and institutions within that Member State. However, the plenary debates did emphasise the positive outcomes likely to ensue from the promotion of indigenous regional and minority languages. A more democratic Europe was seen as one result of greater recognition for these languages as closer links are established with local communities. The call to find the best template or model for multilingualism was made in Parliament, as were claims that indigenous linguistic minorities must be included in any attempt to produce a European Constitution.

If linguistic minorities were indeed going to be the “mortar” rather than the “explosive” in the foundations of a future expanded European Union, positive discrimination in favour of regional languages was seen to have justification. All the major political groupings readily acknowledged in the Chamber that linguistic diversity underscored fundamental rights. The plenary debates that took place on this theme were given added significance by Commissioner Reding’s admission that the very act of debating the topic would assist in overcoming long-standing problems and fears surrounding the place of such minority languages in the European Union.

¹ David Crystal (2000) *Language Death* Cambridge University Press page 134

² Eluned Morgan [PSE] (UK) 18 February 2000

³ Pat the Cope Gallagher [UEN] (IR) 17 March 2000. Also: Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT): ‘... restructuring of the allocation of resources should also involve a significant top-up in the level of appropriations, so that smaller-scale projects [for regional and minority languages] can also be funded.’ 14 April 2000

⁴ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘In Europe, many other languages are spoken... such as Euskera in the Basque Country or Gaelic, whose origins have been lost in the mists of time, and others such as Catalan, Galician and Alsatian, which is spoken right here in Strasbourg.’ 12 April 2000

⁵ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 12 April 2000

⁶ Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines [PPE-DE] (ES): ‘... the objective of this programme [Year of Languages] is to unite people...’ 12 April 2000

⁷ Christa Prets [PSE] (OS): ‘... the minority languages, which must of course be taken into account in the regions concerned...’ 12 April 2000

⁸ Viviane Reding: ‘... the subject of languages is very close to my heart.’ 12 April 2000

⁹ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES): ‘... language occupies an important place in European civilisation and culture, irrespective of numerical considerations regarding the size of the population... It is completely wrong to exclude minority languages from this initiative.’ 13 April 2000

¹⁰ Marianne Eriksson [GUE/NGL] (SV), Pernille Frahm [GUE/NGL] (DA), Herman Schmid [GUE/NGL] (SV), Esko Seppänen [GUE/NGL] (SU) and Jonas Sjöstedt [GUE/NGL] (SV):

‘There are also... minority languages which are now being recognised by democracies. It is also important for posterity to carry out research into languages which are dying out.’ 13 April 2000

¹¹ Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU) 16 June 2000

¹² Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘I [also] propose that Community legislation and the decisions of the Commission itself favour the idea that broadcasts of all mass events... That is the only way we can make Europe into a true union of diversities.’ 5 September 2000

¹³ Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT) 4 October 2000 The Commission response included the following: ‘I [Viviane Reding] am relying very much on the European Year of Languages to set things in motion and to enable us, at the end of that year, to come together and arrive at a lasting solution that does not oblige us to return to the lists each year and do battle to obtain funding.’

¹⁴ Eurig Wyn [Verts/ALE] (UK): ‘It is therefore important that the Commission and Council take this into consideration when considering this report.’ 1 February 2001

¹⁵ Luciano Caveri. [ELDR] (IT) 15 January 2001

¹⁶ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 14 February 2001

¹⁷ Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU) 13 March 2001

¹⁸ Viviane Reding 13 March 2001 According to Reding, other financial contributions were to come from the Commission, which had ‘begun a study into the economic and practical aspects of protecting languages’ and from the Committee of the Regions.

¹⁹ ‘I always begin speaking in Luxembourgish, in order to demonstrate that there are no minority or majority languages. There are only mother tongue languages, which shape individuals and their environment. Rest assured, then, that as a Luxembourger, I shall fight for linguistic diversity in Europe, for all languages to be respected and for progress to be made in the teaching of all languages.’

²⁰ Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT) 13 March 2001

²¹ Concepció Ferrer [PPE-DE] (ES) 13 March 2001

²² The response to Ferrer, herself an advocate for Catalan, included: ‘... the legal bases of the European Year of Languages stipulate that the languages recognised in a Member State, even if they are not official EU languages, should be part of the European Year of Languages’ and ‘I quoted the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which makes linguistic diversity a requirement’. (Reding 13 March 2001)

²³ Christian Danielsson: ‘... where minority languages are concerned, another important institution – which is also geographically close to Parliament – namely the Council of Europe, has drawn up a convention on the status of minority languages. I regard this as also illustrating the importance of the fact that in a discussion of the Union’s Charter of Fundamental Rights we also consider other important instruments in this area, e.g. the Council of Europe’s Convention on Human Rights.’ 4 April 2001

²⁴ The Council of Europe Charter for Regional and Minority Languages was issued on 18 August 2005

²⁵ Alexandros Alavanos [GUE/NGL] (HE) 15 May 2001

²⁶ Didier Rod [Verts/ALE] (FR): ‘It is vitally important...’ 12 June 2001

²⁷ Paul Rübig [PPE-DE] (OS) 13 June 2001

²⁸ Neil Kinnock: 13 June 2001

²⁹ Miet Smet [PPE-DE] (BE) 18 January 2001. Interestingly, it was the same MEP who later that year told Parliament: ‘European seems to be becoming a twelfth language, with terms that, if they are not incomprehensible, have at least taken on a life of their own. You must also already have been ‘benchmarked’, ‘mainstreamed’, etc. The language of Europe has not become the language of Europeans. On the contrary.’! 4 July 2001

³⁰ Carlos Coelho [PPP-DE] (PT) 4 July 2001

³¹ Camilo Nogueira Román [Verts/ALE] (ES) 4 July 2001

³² Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 4 July 2001

³³ Luciano Caveri [ELDR] (IT) 28 November 2001

- ³⁴ Annemie Neyts-Uytebroeck 4 July 2001
- ³⁵ Pat the Cope Gallagher [UEN] (IR) 5 July 2001
- ³⁶ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 6 September 2001
- ³⁷ Johan Van Hecke [PPE-DE] a Dutch-speaking Belgian 2 October 2001
- ³⁸ Eurig Wyn [Verts/ALE] (UK): ‘... we then need to be absolutely certain that there is sufficient scope for national and EU legislation to protect public services and cultural entities.’ 3 October 2001
- ³⁹ Neil MacCormick [Verts/ALE] (UK) 13 November 2001 The following was Commissioner Reding’s reply: ‘*Ech si vollkommen averstane mat deem, wat de Kolleeg Parlamentarier gesot huet* – I fully agree with what the honourable Member has said. Mr President, I was speaking in Luxembourgish and I would say that I have answered the question, having chosen to answer in Luxembourgish.’
- ⁴⁰ Gerard Collins [UEN] (IR) 13 November 2001
- ⁴¹ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 12 December 2001 The other Spaniard championing the case of constitutional regions and autonomous communities was Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE]
- ⁴² Annemie Neyts-Uytebroeck: ‘I also believe that we are perfectly entitled to propagate this solution or to publicise it to the others, which is what Belgium did.’ 12 December 2001 [See also Miet Smet [PPE-DE (BE) in footnote ²⁹ above]
- ⁴³ For example: ‘Why should I agree to your proposed amendment when our article in the resolution is better than your proposed amendment?’
- ⁴⁴ Eluned Morgan [PSE] (UK) 13 December 2001
- ⁴⁵ Eurig Wyn [Verts/ALE] (UK) 13 December 2001
- ⁴⁶ Doris Pack [PPE-DE] (DE): ‘The Commission’s standard response has been that it was not doing anything because it wanted to devise a special programme next year.’
- ⁴⁷ Pere Esteve [ELDR] (ES), Raimon Obiols i Germà [PSE] (ES), Anna Terrón i Cusí [PSE] (ES), Joan Colom i Naval [PSE] (ES), Salvador Jové Peres [GUE/NGL] (ES), Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES), Carles-Alfred Gasóliba i Böhm [ELDR] (ES) and Concepció Ferrer [PPE-DE] (ES)
- ⁴⁸ Pere Esteve [ELDR] (ES): ‘You will understand that my only objective here is the recognition of Catalan as an official language of the European Union. This hope is better expressed by my friend, the poet Jordi Gabarró. He says in Catalan: “*Demà, en un futur de convivència, la raó ha de guanyar*”. In English: “Tomorrow, in a future of coexistence, reason must prevail”. (*Applause*)’ 13 December 2001
- ⁴⁹ Bernd Posselt [PPE-DE] (DE) 13 December 2001
- ⁵⁰ Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT) 13 December 2001
- ⁵¹ Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT): ‘... so that the problems which have arisen in the past from majorities or minorities remain a thing of the past and positive solutions to these problems can be found.’ 13 December 2001
- ⁵² Guy Verhofstadt: ‘I sometimes hear people say that federalism spells disaster. Quite the opposite. Throughout the world, federalism demonstrates that it is the only way for communities to live together without conflict, without turning to violence, as is the case in many parts of the world. (*Applause*)... *I do not need to tell you that around the Council table there were certain people who found it difficult to include the words ‘regions with legislative powers’ in the declaration and difficult to recognise, as the European Council, that those regions may have a place and a say. It has finally been accepted...*’ [My emphasis]
- ⁵³ Luciano Caveri [ELDR] (IT): ‘Genuine, practical federalism, which also respects the regional level, as the Council has rightly said, which respects minority languages and all peoples, great and small, will burst into the history of this new century as part of the process of European integration...’ 17 December 2001
- ⁵⁴ Gérard Onesta [Verts/ALE] (FR) 15 January 2002
- ⁵⁵ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES): ‘Yesterday Mr Poettering mentioned the relevance of you [Pat Cox] being Irish as the best evidence of political success for the small

countries of our continent. As a Basque, I was very pleased to hear that, because the Republic of Ireland, which has only existed for a century, can give a European stateless nation like ours a very encouraging example.’ 16 January 2002

⁵⁶ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘*Más Europa*’ also implies that Catalan, a language spoken by almost 10 million Europeans, can be established in this House. This is enshrined in the Charter on Fundamental Rights and is part of our cultural diversity... when I look at the stars on our flag, I see old and young nations rising up in the four corners of Europe. They all wish to take their place, their rightful place in this common Chamber. Allow me to finish in Catalan... *Visca Catalunya lliure!* [Long live a free Catalonia!] *Visca Europa unida!* [Long live a united Europe!]

 16 January 2001

⁵⁷ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘... it is expecting the European Union to acknowledge Catalonia for what it is, in other words, a major nation... Catalonia is hoping for a Europe that welcomes immigrants and shows solidarity for people who fight against new forms of colonisation. Catalonia needs Europe, without a doubt, but Europe also needs Catalonia. *Seny* – Catalan common sense, in other words – would work wonders at the Council and the Commission.’ 27 February 2002

⁵⁸ Camilo Nogueira Román [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘... constitutional nationalities and regions, *Länder*, federal states that have a constitutional and, in certain cases, an historical and political identity as nations, which cannot be ignored or denied in this Europe of unity in diversity.’ 16 May 2002

⁵⁹ Bart Staes [Verts/ALE] a Dutch-speaking Belgian: ‘...the sum total of the regionalist and nationalist Members within the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance... ’ 11 June 2002

⁶⁰ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 1 July 2002

⁶¹ Seán Ó Neachtain [UEN] (IR) [Translated as]: ‘I undertake to assiduously serve the region I represent, in particular with regard to policies which touch on the daily lives of people in rural communities. Having been a member of the Committee of the Regions for eight years, I am firmly convinced of the important role of regions and the need to empower them to take the decisions on so many aspects which affect their communities.’ 3 July 2002

⁶² Raina Echerer [Verts/ALE] (OS): ‘Rather than promote European content in this globalised age in which we live, we are supporting the big boys – big countries, big co-productions. That way, the little guys, the smaller countries, and the lesser-used languages lose out.’ 24 September 2002

⁶³ Roy Perry [PPE-DE] (UK): ‘The citizens of Europe do not distinguish between the institutions of the European Union.’ 26 September 2002

⁶⁴ Jacob-Magnus Söderman: ‘Secure protection for minorities is something we could certainly export to many corners of the world.’ 26 September 2002

⁶⁵ Iñigo Méndez de Vigo [PPE-DE] (ES) 13 January 2003

⁶⁶ Seán Ó Neachtain [UEN] (IR): ‘Linguistic and cultural diversity is not about defining or redefining boundaries; it underpins the cultural strength of our enlarging European Union.’ 13 January 2003

⁶⁷ Paolo Costa [ELDR] (IT): ‘It [the Convention] started off focusing its attention solely on the first level of *subsidiarity*, the *subsidiarity* between the Union and the States. We need to free ourselves from this trap because, if we endorse this system of two levels of *subsidiarity* – *subsidiarity* between the Union and the States and between the States and the territorial authorities – we prevent – and I feel that this is the crux of the matter – recognition of that direct connection between the European institutions and the territorial authorities which now exists and which is yielding promising fruit, where it is not misinterpreted or destroyed at birth. We must resist this temptation at all costs... ’

⁶⁸ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL): ‘Mr President, it is not only dictatorships that traditionally evoke resistance from many of their inhabitants; centralised states and multiethnic states do so as well. Centralisation means arrogant governments that think they know better than the people who are experiencing the regional problems and who choose solutions for them

themselves... Democratic government in Europe cannot exist if cultural diversity and regional differences are not taken into account.' 13 January 2003

⁶⁹ Sérgio Marques [PPE-DE] (PT): 'I particularly support the need for the Union to find new ways for regional and local authorities to participate in Community activities without neglecting the important role of the Committee of the Regions.' 14 January 2003

⁷⁰ Charles Pasqua [UEN] (FR): 'Those who are naïve enough to respond to the siren calls of so-called local democracy or new governance, which are concepts manufactured by the ruling technostructure, should know that the decentralisation game promoted by and for federalists can only have one winner: at the end of the day, it is Brussels that, by absorbing the new 'prerogatives' provisionally granted to local bodies, will gain from a process that it has skilfully controlled.' 14 January 2003

⁷¹ Luis Queiró [UEN] (PT) 14 January 2003

⁷² Maria Sanders-ten Holte [ELDR] (NL): 'According to Article 149 of the Treaty on European Union, the European Union's task is to support linguistic diversity. This is not enough...' 15 January 2003

⁷³ Juan Bayona de Perogordo [PPE-DE] (ES) 8 April 2003

⁷⁴ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] a Dutch-speaking Belgian: 'Recognition of the small [languages] is our guarantee of democracy in Europe.' 9 April 2003

⁷⁵ Neil McCormick [Verts/ALE] (UK) 18 June 2003

⁷⁶ Joan Vallvé [ELDR] (ES) 3 June 2003

⁷⁷ Bernd Posselt [PPE-DE] (DE) 3 June 2003

⁷⁸ Robert J.E. Evans [PSE] (UK): '... respect for someone else's language, respect for that person and his or her culture and customs, helps support the integration of those communities.' 3 June 2003

⁷⁹ Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT) 3 June 2003

⁸⁰ Viviane Reding: 'The definition of minority and regional languages used by the European Commission is that established by the Council of Europe in its European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. What we mean by a regional or minority language is, and I quote, a language 'traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population, and different from the official language(s) of that state'. This definition therefore encompasses many languages that are minority languages in one country but majority languages in another.' 3 June 2003

⁸¹ Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT): 'I would like to dispel the misgivings of the minorities, the small linguistic communities within the EU and of those who will be joining it... This wealth of languages makes for diversity and enriches us, and it will be possible for many of these minorities to function as bridges between States.' 4 September 2003

⁸² Viviane Reding 4 September 2003

⁸³ GUE/NGL was represented in written *verbali* the following day.

⁸⁴ Theresa Zabell [PPE-DE] (ES): 'Above all, moreover, I must say that we feel very proud of this.' 4 September 2003 [This remark is in complete antithesis to the opinions of some other Spanish MEPs – see, for example, footnotes ⁴⁷ and ⁴⁸ above or Part Two of this Chapter below.]

⁸⁵ Joan Vallvé [ELDR] (ES): 'We are not asking, under any circumstances, that Catalan should be a working language – the European Union's linguistic system is quite complex enough...' 4 September 2003

⁸⁶ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES): 'My national language, Catalan, is spoken by more than 10 million citizens of the European Union. These 10 million people cannot use their own language in their relations with the Union. We are therefore discriminated against in relation to our fellow European citizens.' 4 September 2003

⁸⁷ Joan Vallvé [ELDR] (ES) 22 September 2003 The figures quoted for the French and Italian versions were 63,000 and 51,000 subscriptions respectively. The president's reply was itself revealing: 'Thank you, Mr Vallvé, you clearly have a very active interest in this matter.'

⁸⁸ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 4 September 2003

- ⁸⁹ Myrsini Zorba [PSE] (HE) 4 September 2003
- ⁹⁰ Eurig Wyn [Verts/ALE] (UK): 'Today, through Mr Ebner's report we are at last putting that into practice and supporting language learning and multilingualism, including minority languages, like the language I am speaking now, Welsh, my mother tongue... We only want to live a full life through the medium of our language, whilst not giving up, of course, the pleasure of learning and mastering many languages which open doors to cultures and windows to a better understanding of others.' 4 September 2003
- ⁹¹ Seán Ó Neachtain [UEN] (IR): 'The variety of regional and lesser-used languages across the continent of Europe is an integral part of our unique cultural heritage... Nevertheless, I am convinced that by pooling a certain amount of our resources and experience, we can bring about improvements which would have Europe-wide benefits.' 4 September 2003
- ⁹² Alain Esclopé [EDD] (FR) 4 September 2003
- ⁹³ Alain Esclopé [EDD] (FR): 'That would make it possible to respect cultural traditions and the administrative and constitutional organisation of each state... I hope that the excellent links we have with the Council of Europe can continue to grow, especially with the secretariat of the Charter. That would seem to me to be a pragmatic and effective way of encouraging and developing the use of our regional languages.' 4 September 2003
- ⁹⁴ Bruno Gollnisch [NI] (FR): 'Minority languages may be national or official languages in a Member State, one example being the German-speaking population in the Alto Adige region or South Tyrol, as mentioned by the *rapporteur*. Although these people speak German, it is more questionable whether German can be considered a regional language in Alsace as the Alsatian dialect, which is undoubtedly Germanic, is substantially different.' 4 September 2003
- ⁹⁵ Maria Martens [PPE-DE] (NL): 'I sincerely hope that the Commission will manage to present a legislative proposal on language diversity by the end of this year. Peace in Europe is not only about effective economic cooperation. It is, above all, about demonstrating an interest in, respect for, and understanding of, people from a different culture. Language is an important key in this.' 4 September 2003
- ⁹⁶ Christa Prets [PSE] (OS): 'I know how difficult it is to meet all the demands involved in using languages properly and in maintaining them.' 4 September 2003
- ⁹⁷ Mathieu Grosch [PPE-DE] (BE) 4 September 2003
- ⁹⁸ Neil MacCormick [Verts/ALE] (UK): 'It is a great tragedy that the languages of Duncan Ban MacIntyre and Robert Burns have become more or less foreign languages to the children of Argyllshire and Ayrshire respectively... These are examples from one country of a universal European problem.' 4 September 2003
- ⁹⁹ Ulpu Iivari [PSE] (SU) 4 September 2003
- ¹⁰⁰ Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU) She referred approvingly to "language baths" as mentioned in the Ebner report: 'This is an extremely good method, which has been used to good effect in South Tyrol, Catalonia and Finland'. 4 September 2003
- ¹⁰¹ Raimon Obiols i Germà [PSE] (ES) 4 September 2003
- ¹⁰² Bernd Posselt [PPE-DE] (DE) 4 September 2003
- ¹⁰³ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL): 'Within Europe, there has been a long-term battle for education, administration and work in the citizens' own national language.' 4 September 2003
- ¹⁰⁴ Marco Cappato [NI] (IT): 'I fear that the situation is a lot less positive than some of the speakers would have us believe.' 4 September 2003
- ¹⁰⁵ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] a Dutch-speaking Belgian 24 September 2003
- ¹⁰⁶ Carles-Alfred Gasòliba i Böhm [ELDR] (ES) 24 September 2003
- ¹⁰⁷ Joan Vallvé [ELDR] (ES) 24 September 2003
- ¹⁰⁸ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES): 'We wanted to be able to participate at a European level as far as our legislative competencies permitted... The State of Catalonia must be re-established if we are to be able to contribute fully to Europe...' 24 September 2003
- ¹⁰⁹ Concepció Ferrer [PPE-DE] (ES) 24 September 2003
- ¹¹⁰ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 20 October 2003

¹¹¹ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 21 October 2003

¹¹² Bernd Posselt [PPE-DE] (DE) 23 October 2003 Among the detail in the Commission's reply there were included references to the following:

- the *Mercator* network 'whose main role is the collection, storage, analysis and circulation of information via an information and documentation network intended for the Union's regional and minority languages'

- the *Mercator* Media centre 'covering the following areas: press, publication of books, archives and libraries, as well as television, radio and new media'

- EUROLANG (<http://www.eurolang.net>), created in 2000, 'deals with all medias and broadcasts news and information about linguistic diversity in Europe. It covers events of general interest for the language communities concerned as well as information at European level'

- the portal Lingualia (<http://www.lingualia.net/>), created by the Bureau in collaboration with the *Mercator* network. 'This European portal for regional and minority languages in Europe, aims to be a quality Internet service for all regional and minority language communities. Part of the information relates to minorities in the candidate and accession countries.'

- within the context of enlargement, a recently launched extension to the *Euromosaic* study (<http://www.uoc.edu/euromosaic/>). 'This study will enable us to have a thorough knowledge of the situation regarding regional and minority languages in the candidate countries, in particular of their presence in the media.'

¹¹³ 6 November 2003

¹¹⁴ See footnote ³⁵ above

¹¹⁵ Camilo Nogueira Román [Verts/ALE] (ES) 21 September 2000 During the debate, this Member referred to Galicia as 'my country'.

¹¹⁶ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES) 21 September 2000

¹¹⁷ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES): '... the Basque country, a country torn to pieces. The southern part under Spanish rule is split into two autonomous regions: Navarre and the so-called Euskadi. The northern part under French rule has no official recognition whatsoever, despite the clear will of two thirds of the citizens and elected representatives to have a Basque *département* of its own.' 3 October 2000

¹¹⁸ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES) 28 February 2001

¹¹⁹ Bruno Gollnisch [TDI] (FR) 3 October 2000

¹²⁰ Michl Ebner [PPE-DE] (IT) 13 March 2001

¹²¹ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 4 April 2001

¹²² Christian Danielsson 4 April 2001 [See footnote ²³ above]

¹²³ Bart Staes [Verts/ALE] 5 April 2001; Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 5 April 2001

¹²⁴ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES): '... unacceptable State terrorism, which we Basques have also suffered, perpetrated by the apparatus of the Spanish State.' 5 September 2001

¹²⁵ Mario Borghezio [TDI] (IT) Earlier in his speech he had said, '... there is something very important missing from the motion for a resolution on human rights in the world: the principle of the self-determination of peoples. We Padanians consider this to be a serious omission because it is impossible not to see that the denial or, in any case, the decision not to emphasise this right is one of the greatest possible violations of human rights.' 4 July 2001

¹²⁶ Frank Vanhecke [NI] a Dutch-speaking Belgian 17 December 2001

¹²⁷ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 7 February 2002

¹²⁸ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 13 March 2002

¹²⁹ Ramón de Miguel: 'The Council's position on this particular issue is laid down in its Regulation (EC) No 1 of 1958, successively amended for the purposes of the accessions of

new Member States, which lays down that there are currently eleven official working languages in the European Union.’ 13 March 2002

¹³⁰ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘I would like to ask you what the reason is for this closed and anti-democratic attitude to something which goes hand in hand with the wealth of cultural diversity in both Europe and the Spanish state?’ 13 March 2002

¹³¹ Ramón de Miguel 13 March 2002

¹³² Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘... it is true that, before we start giving lectures, we should take a look at ourselves.’ 19 November 2002

¹³³ Mario Borghezio [NI] (IT) 3 July 2002

¹³⁴ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 16 December 2002

¹³⁵ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 18 December 2002

¹³⁶ Bertel Haarder *President-in-Office of the Council* 18 December 2002

¹³⁷ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 19 December 2002

¹³⁸ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 18 December 2002

¹³⁹ Bertel Haarder: ‘I believe that we will become more aware of [regional languages]’ 18 December 2002

¹⁴⁰ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 10 March 2003

¹⁴¹ Gerardo Galeote [PPE-DE] (ES) 10 March 2003

¹⁴² Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 26 March 2003

¹⁴³ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) His conclusion was: ‘At present, enlargement seems reminiscent of lemmings rushing to the sea’! 9 April 2003

¹⁴⁴ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES) 12 May 2003

¹⁴⁵ Miquel Mayol i Raynal [Verts/ALE] (ES) 3 June 2003

¹⁴⁶ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES): ‘I would like to refer to Articles 6 and 7 of the European Union Treaty, which indicate, respectively, that that Union is based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the Rule of Law. And that, on the proposal of Parliament or the Commission, the Council can note the existence of a clear risk of serious violation of these principles on the part of a Member State.’ 4 June 2003

¹⁴⁷ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 3 September 2003

¹⁴⁸ Jorge Salvador Hernández Mollar [PPE-DE] (ES) 3 September 2003

¹⁴⁹ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 5 September 2001

¹⁵⁰ Mario Borghezio [NI] (IT) 4 September 2003

¹⁵¹ Mario Borghezio [NI] (IT) 4 September 2003

¹⁵² Michael Gahler [PPE-DE] (DE) 4 September 2003

¹⁵³ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 15 May 2001

¹⁵⁴ See “Support for or opposition to a lingua franca” in Chapter Two above.

¹⁵⁵ Philip Claeyss [NI] a Dutch-speaking Belgian 4 September 2003

¹⁵⁶ Karel Dillen [NI] a Dutch-speaking Belgian 20 October 2003

¹⁵⁷ Carles-Alfred Gasòliba i Böhm [ELDR] (ES) 4 September 2003

¹⁵⁸ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES) 20 October 2003

¹⁵⁹ Michael Gahler [PPE-DE] (DE) 4 September 2003

CHAPTER SIX: DESIRE OR DEMAND – PRONOUNCEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON THE STATE OF MINORITY INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN NON- MEMBER STATES

For countries wanting to join the European Union, the preconditions to be met included satisfying the political criteria as laid down by the Copenhagen European Council in June 1993. According to these criteria, any candidate country was required to demonstrate the existence of stable institutions at home that would guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for as well as the protection of minorities. Where did the issue of linguistic diversity figure in all of this as far as the Members of the European Parliament between 2000 and 2003 were concerned? Did the matter of regional and minority autochthonous languages in countries seeking accession prompt comment from MEPs in the fifth parliamentary term? In fact, was the matter even regarded as sufficiently important in the minds of MEPs for it to be raised during the plenary debates?

Firstly, this Chapter considers what Members of the European Parliament had to say including the exchanges that took place in the Chamber between MEPs and representatives of the Commission and the Council about linguistic diversity in Estonia, Latvia and Slovakia, which were among the ten countries wishing to become full Member States in 2004. What MEPs had to say about the protection of minority indigenous languages in three other countries that were hoping to become Member States at some time in the future – Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey – is then discussed. The Chapter concludes by exploring whether the language situation in any other country was the subject of comment in the Parliament.

Members of Parliament who participated more than once to the plenary debates, either orally or by way of written declaration, on the issue of regional and minority languages in countries that were not yet Member States of the European Union are shown in Table 6.1:

Table 6.1 Major contributors to the debates on the use of minority autochthonous languages in non-Member States

MEMBER	POLITICAL GROUP	MEMBER STATE	POLITICAL PARTY
Fatuzzo, Carlo	PPE-DE	IT	Partito Pensionati
Lagendijk, Joost	Verts/ALE	NL	GroenLinks
Maes, Nelly	Verts/ALE	BE	België Spirit
Meijer, Erik	GUE/NGL	NL	Socialistische Partij
Podestà, Guido	PPE-DE	IT	Forza Italia
Posselt, Bernd	PPE-DE	DE	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern e.V.
Schroedter, Elizabeth	Verts/ALE	DE	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen
Swoboda, Hannes	PSE	OS	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs
Uca, Feleknas	GUE/NGL	DE	Die Linke

‘The European Union should be more than a market. It is also a community of citizens and, in addition, a collection of peoples and of smaller and larger cultural communities’ - Nelly Maes (BE)

In October 2000, the German MEP Alfred Gomolka raised in the Parliament the problem of the comparatively large number of ethnic Russians living particularly in Latvia and Estonia, but also in Lithuania. He was referring both to the Russian speakers who had arrived in the Baltic States over a period of decades because of Soviet occupation of these States and also to their families whose mother tongue was Russian. Gomolka alluded in his speech to the positive moderating influence of the European Union on the citizenship and language laws that had been originally introduced in these countries, principally to safeguard the survival of the national languages there.

According to Gomolka, these ‘legal hurdles’ having now been overcome, ‘many Russian-speaking citizens are now prepared to recognise the citizens’ rights and duties, both in Latvia and Estonia, which are the countries worst affected’. While acknowledging that the process was having very mixed success, it, nevertheless, ‘still inspires great hope, because it will mean that these citizens will also become citizens of the Union in the future’. Ensuring that these Russian speakers did not become disaffected residents of Latvia and Estonia, in particular, would have the spin-off effect, some time in the future, of making these same people ‘agents of cross-border

cooperation' in an enlarged European Union'.¹ It was a message taken up the next day in the Chamber when a written declaration referred to Union expansion bringing about stability and wellbeing on the continent. The same declaration asserted that Estonia's language law of 2000 was 'in accordance with all international norms'.²

While there are a striking number of similarities in the situations regarding these languages, Latvian and Estonian are in fact very different languages themselves. Latvian – also known as Lettish – is a Baltic language of the Indo-European family of languages whose earliest texts in the Gothic script date from the sixteenth century. In 1922 the Latin alphabet was adopted for Latvian along with diacritics. Around the time of the fifth term of the European Parliament, a little over half of the two million Latvians claimed Latvian as their mother tongue. At the same time, although about one third of the population regarded Russian as their mother tongue, knowledge of Russian was more widespread among the population than was knowledge of Latvian. Estonian, on the other hand, is a member of the Finnic group of the Finno-Ugric family of languages. The northern dialect of Estonian forms the basis of the literary language that uses the Latin alphabet. The earliest texts of Estonian also date from the sixteenth century but few texts were produced before the nineteenth century because of the dominance of Russian and Swedish. In the case of Estonia, while there was a smaller percentage of the population with Russian as their first language (about twenty-eight per cent) as compared with Estonian (about sixty-five per cent), knowledge of Russian was still more widespread at the time the first language laws were enacted in Estonia towards the end of the 1980s.

The Language Law of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) was adopted on 18 January 1989. The official language of the Estonian SSR was henceforth Estonian (Article 1) thereby laying a 'firm foundation' for the preservation and development of the Estonian people and Estonian culture. The same law acknowledged the 'inalienable right' of citizens of all other nationalities to use their native language and develop their vernacular culture, and gave the assurance of equality for all citizens before the law regardless of their native language. People whose jobs required communication with individuals, for example, state authority and government workers, law enforcement officers, medical personnel and journalists were to be subjected to certain requirements of language competence (Article 4). There was

provision to protect individuals who wished to use their own language as clients in services and trade or as subordinates in employment (Articles 5 and 6). Moreover, Article 7 actually went so far as to signal punishment for anyone inhibiting or disparaging an individual's choice of language. Equal rights were afforded to every citizen to general state-provided education in their mother tongue. While education would be guaranteed in Estonian throughout Estonia, general education in Russian was guaranteed in accordance with the distribution of the Russian-speaking population (Article 19). According to the Estonian Institute³, the law was not effectively implemented in schools. The Institute argues that the provisions governing those employed in government offices and in the service sector, while taking effect from 1 February 1993, did not mean that in districts where the language of more than fifty per cent of the population was a language other than Estonian, the inhabitants could not receive information in that other language or, indeed, that the local government could not conduct business in that other language.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia's independence was restored (6 January 1991) and Estonian became the only state language in Estonia. The country was, therefore, not officially a bilingual state, even if it functioned on a bilingual basis during the years immediately following. Soviet Union occupation of Latvia and Estonia beginning in 1940 and ending in 1991 – interrupted only by the Nazi occupation between 1941 and 1944 – had obviously resulted in the presence of a quite large Russian-speaking ethnic group.

David Laitin⁴ has written of that era when Russian was the predominant language of administration, business and education, and when teachers were advised to indoctrinate their students to love the Russian language and when – in 1978 – Russian was prioritised as a language over Estonian and the Communist Party declared that Russian was the only means of active participation in social life.⁵ The restrictions that were placed in that era on the use and teaching of the Estonian language resulted in Estonian having a status as a language below that of Russian.⁶

Unsurprisingly, there is not universal agreement among academics for this view. For example, Vadim Poleshchuk⁷ is almost dismissive of claims of linguistic repression, asserting that there is little evidence to support such claims. He refers to a study by a

Norwegian scholar Paul Kolstø whose conclusions from sociological statistical data were that ‘during the post-Stalinist period the Russian diasporas were culturally and linguistically privileged in relation to other non-titular groups in the republics, but were usually not so privileged in relation to titular groups’.⁸ Poleshchuk himself argues that because census figures showed that by 1989 approximately 99 per cent of Estonians (and Latvians) claimed the language of their ethnic group to be their mother tongue ‘such figures hardly bear out claims of entrenched linguistic assimilation by the Soviet authorities’.

Wherever the truth lies, the citizenship and language laws that had been enacted in the newly independent Estonia – and indeed in Latvia – were principally designed to “restore” the primacy of their native language (and culture). Moreover, since by 1989 ethnic Estonians constituted only 61.5 per cent of the Estonian population and ethnic Latvians only 52 per cent of the Latvian population, it might be argued that the citizenship and language laws were also driven by the hope that some ethnic Russians might be encouraged to decamp to the Russian Federation. The newly enacted laws would have left some in the Russian populations apprehensive for the future of their own status in the newly independent countries. Furthermore, a new Constitution for Estonia, approved by a 28 June 1992 referendum, came into effect on 3 July of the same year with the effect that any attempt on the part of any ethnic minority to create an ethnically autonomous region would be rendered in breach of the Constitution.⁹ The Constitution also introduced a “two language regime”: Estonian as a common language and a tool for nation building and Estonian minority language bilingualism. But it was not really until 1995 that this regime was sanctioned by new language (and citizenship) laws.

The aim of Latvian language laws had been to increase the influence of the Latvian language and to promote a faster integration of society. The concept of “language = nation” – refer to the philosophy of von Herder outlined in Chapter Two above – could be seen as the driving force for the language policy of the Latvian state. In fact, Article 18 of the Latvian Constitution required members of the Latvian parliament from 2002 to promise to strengthen Latvian as the only official language before they take their seats. Until a decision of the European Court of Human Rights, candidates standing for central or local elections in the 1990s were required to demonstrate a

certain competency in the Latvian language. A State Language Law, which took effect in Latvia in 2000, meant that documents submitted to central or local government and state public enterprises had to be in Latvian. Section 6 of this law defined levels of skills to work in various professions. It has been asserted that Russophones were potentially the largest linguistic minority by percentage who enjoyed no official status for their language in the soon to be expanded European Union of 2004. The claim was made ¹⁰ in 2000 by one of the academics who helped design Latvian language policy that during the 1970s and 1980s non-Russians in her country were effectively faced with one option only, namely “voluntary self-assimilation”. Latvia had indeed signed the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995 but had not yet ratified it. Furthermore, Latvia had not given any indication of signing the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Latvia’s treatment of national minorities was called into question in the European Parliament in mid-2001 when doubt was raised as to whether that treatment was ‘compatible’ with Latvia’s aspirations to become a member of the European Union.¹¹ In response, the representative of the Swedish Presidency of the Council expressed satisfaction with the ‘significant’ advances made in the protection of minorities including the adoption of a Language Law that would facilitate the integration of “non-citizens” into Latvian society, although the Council did admit that the situation would still require careful monitoring.

Individual Members of the European Parliament were obviously also monitoring the position of Russian speakers in Latvia because later in the same year another German MEP was critical of the role that Russian speakers were being allowed to play in the accession process. The Commission should be insisting – so this Member ¹² said – that language was not allowed to be a barrier preventing the Russian speakers – who were no longer part of the political elite in the country – from participating in the processes leading to Latvia’s membership of the European Union.

More than fifteen months later, concern was still being expressed in the Parliament as to the fate of ethnic Russians in Latvia (as well as that of the large ethnic minorities in other applicant countries) on the grounds that there had not been significant

improvements since 1999. It was even claimed that the situation had not improved at all since this date.¹³ This, however, proved not to be the official European Union view as articulated in the Parliament. A representative of the Danish Presidency of the Council cited a 2002 Regular Report from the Commission that had praised Latvia for encouraging the further integration of non-citizens into Latvian society by removing language requirements in the election law and had concluded that Latvia continued to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria referred to at the start of this Chapter. So it was in April 2003, that *rapporteur* Schroedter recommended to fellow MEPs that they vote for Latvia's accession to the European Union in spite of 'some important things not being perfect'. She would have liked to see 'the programme for integrating the Russian-speaking population pursued with greater enthusiasm' but, on balance, concluded that 'we do not want to deprive ourselves of joining with Latvia, its culture, its language and its willingness to reform, because there is also a gain for us'.¹⁴

The fact that the treaty of accession was signed and the date for joining the European Union set for 1 May 2004 did not mean that problems relating to language automatically disappeared in Latvia or Estonia – well not according to every Member of the European Parliament. Parliament was told that 'hundreds of thousands of citizens'¹⁵ of the two countries were being denied citizenship or civil rights largely related to their language or descent even though they had lived in those countries for decades or, indeed, had been born there. In a Question addressed to the Council, Ioannis Patakis asked whether initiatives would be taken to:

'address this serious problem, even after the signature of the Acts of Accession of these countries to the [European Union], in order to ensure that those who so desire can obtain citizenship and their civil rights, restore democratic legitimacy and prevent the results of the referendums ratifying the accession of these countries to the [European Union] and the representativeness of the European Parliament elections being undermined?'

The official reply from the representatives of the Italian Presidency of the Council was that Latvia and Estonia, along with the other eight States in line for membership, would be monitored for compliance with the political criteria for accession established at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993. Such monitoring for compliance included monitoring the protection of minorities, up to the time of accession '*as it goes without saying that they are obliged to comply*'. [My emphasis]

For her part, the Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga, in an emotion-charged address to the European Parliament a month later, did not shy away from the issue of language. After saying that Latvians saw joining Europe as an opportunity to maintain their identity, culture and language, she told her audience that the Latvian language had been ‘engulfed’ by the language of occupation, Russian, for fifty years in a policy ‘aimed at the total Russification of Latvia and the destruction of its national identity’. As a result, Latvians were not far off becoming a minority in their own homeland. She passionately defended in her speech the ‘considerable efforts’ that had been made to ensure that minorities were able to maintain their languages and traditions, but, to applause from the Chamber, she declared:

‘While fully respecting everyone’s right to preserve his or her language, culture and ethnic identity, every democratic country simultaneously nurtures the obligation to create the conditions enabling every inhabitant to participate fully in the political and economic life of his or her country. I know of no country in the world in which people would be able to participate in this way without having an adequate command of the national language which, in our case, happens to be Latvian... The logical consequence is that the Latvian state has a very particular responsibility towards the Latvian language, one of only two surviving languages in the family of Baltic tongues. Latvian, which is spoken by fewer than two million people throughout the world, therefore constitutes a unique feature of our great European cultural heritage.’¹⁶

Significantly, earlier in her speech Vike-Freiberga had emphasised that the main asset of Europe was its languages and cultures. The linguistic and cultural diversity contributed to the very reason for the existence of the European Union as expressed, she noted, by the new motto proposed by the Convention on the future of Europe: “united in diversity”.

The European Union provided financial as well as political backing for integration programmes to address the concerns and needs of the large ethnic minorities in these Baltic countries and to achieve bilingualism among the ethnic minorities. This European Union “intervention” came about because in Estonia, while minority language primary schools would still be allowed, the aim was to have state secondary schools either bilingual or in Estonian only from 2007. And in Latvia there was less choice planned for – bilingual education was to be permitted at primary school level only and secondary schooling was to be in Latvian only as from 2004.

Changes to language laws in Latvia (1992 Amendment) and in Estonia (1995 Law on Language referred to above) ushered in restrictions on the use of a non-State language for public information, while proficiency in the use of Latvian and Estonian was determined by examinations.

In the case of Estonia, the European Commission in its (13 October) 1999 Regular Report on Estonia's Progress towards accession saw the requirement to use Estonian while taking part in the exchange of goods and services as part of one's work to be a threat to that country's obligations under the Europe Agreement. Therefore, a revised 1999 Accession Partnership included a goal that would bring language laws in Estonia into line with "international standards" and the Europe Agreement. The Estonian Parliament responded on 14 June 2000 by passing Amendments to the Law on Language limiting the requirements to use Estonian during the offering of goods and services to cases 'in the public interest', interest such as public and consumer safety, health and order. [Article 21, Section 2]

These, and succeeding Amendments, drew approval as was referred to in the plenary debates of the European Parliament from the Commission, as well as the Presidency, in the same year, stating that 'Estonia had made considerable progress'. At the same time, the Commission requested that Estonia adopt a more appropriate secondary language laws.¹⁷ Then on 13 November 2001, the Regular Report from the Commission noted that Estonia should 'ensure that in the implementation of this regulation [public interest], the principles of proportionality and justified public interest are properly respected'.¹⁸

As for Latvia, the Accession Partnership, like Estonia's, required language laws by the end of 2000 to comply with international standards and the Europe Agreement. Also, in what was remarkably similar to what pertained in Estonia, laws related to the use of Latvian contained phrases like 'public interest' or 'legitimate public interest'.¹⁹ The European Commission was concerned that such provisions in laws were open to many different interpretations, and, therefore, the Commission's 2000 report sounded this warning to the Latvian Government:

‘... only apply and enforce the Language Law and its implementing regulations to the extent required a legitimate public interest, having regard to the principle of proportionality... in view of... the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Europe Agreement. These include, for example, the exercise of business activities for enterprises from the European Union.’²⁰

Involvement by MEPs in the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term on the issue of linguistic diversity in Estonia and Latvia encouraged the resolve of the Commission at least to protect the interests of European Union citizens in these Baltic States.

Interaction between the the European Union (Parliament and Commission) on one side and the Estonian and Latvian Governments on the other side seems in retrospect to have taken on something of the ritual of an avian courtship dance. Each language law proposed or enacted in these countries prompts a reminder of obligations that exist in international agreements and this reminder is followed by some legislative or regulatory adjustment on the part of the Estonian or Latvian Government in the hope of satisfying the European Union without compromising too much on those Governments’ original goals for their language laws.

The language issues evident in Slovakia, another of the ten candidate countries for accession in 2004, exercised the minds of a number of Members of the European Parliament during the fifth term. In particular, concern was expressed regarding the situation facing Hungarian and Romany speakers in that country.

The plight of Roma people in Slovakia was raised in late 2000 by the *rapporteur* for that country, in doing so hoping to prove that in his case he did not fall into the category of ‘being unpaid ambassadors of their candidate state and of being blinded by their love’. He said that situation of the Roma ‘leaves a great deal to be desired’ and singled out the way in which Slovakia’s Law on the Use of Minority Languages was being implemented. He acknowledged that this law was a ‘step in the right direction’ but that its ‘technical’ implementation had been ‘inadequate’. ²¹ The same *rapporteur* called for an open debate to take place in Slovakia on how the public viewed the Roma people and for all to recognise where prejudice existed. A Belgian MEP in the Chamber took up this latter approach on the same day. In a very

thoughtful speech, she emphasised that respect for the cultural identity of a minority would increase the self-respect of that minority and that in turn would lead to self-development. Consequently, the minority would then be motivated to give something back to the wider community. Roma's problem, she contended, was the problem of 'a nation without a country' ²² and that being so, it was, therefore a problem also for the European Union, she maintained.

Yet, during the same debate, the feeling was expressed that credit should be given ²³ for the progress with regard to the protection of minorities that had taken place in Slovakia and especially since the Roma language was now allowed to be used in the fifty-seven districts in which Roma constituted more than twenty per cent of the population. Interestingly, there were rumours at the time in Slovakia that prominent politician Vladimír Mečiar (see further below) had orchestrated the sending of Roma people to western European countries like Belgium and the Netherlands to complain that Roma had been denied their legitimate human rights, this in order to jeopardise Slovakia's bid for membership of the European Union.

The language laws of Slovakia had their origins in events that had occurred many decades earlier. Attempts at the beginning of the twentieth century on the part of the then Hungarian government to deny Slovaks the use of their mother tongue had left Slovaks resentful of Magyar, the Hungarian language. Therefore, on the formation of Czechoslovakia after World War I, when the Slovaks were allowed to develop their own language, one that was very closely related to the Czech language, Hungarian became a minority language in the newly formed country. Despite some lingering resentment towards past Hungarian hegemony, as far back as 1920 there was a law that permitted minority languages in local and state administrative offices and in the courts where minorities comprised twenty per cent of the population. All this was interrupted when, with the consent of Nazi Germany, Hungary seized control of southern Slovakia where a majority of Hungarians lived in 1938. At the end of World War II, the minority status of Hungarians among the Slovaks was restored, but there was no lessening of the antipathy that existed towards the Magyar language from the majority. Yet the Communist leadership of Czechoslovakia was prepared to tolerate cultural autonomy in return for the population's acquiescence to their political control.

However, once Communist control was lost, moves were taken against the use of Hungarian on Slovakian public signs. In an attempt to retain control of government, Vladimír Mečiar (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS)) bought the support of Hungarian nationals with a July 1994 law to allow the use of Hungarian as the official language in areas where at least twenty per cent of the population spoke Hungarian. But this tolerance did not last long because on 15 November of the following year, a law was passed that made Slovak the only language permitted in the civil service, in advertisements and on road signs. The Slovak National Party (SNS) was arguing loudly that Hungary wanted to take control of the southern part of Slovakia and that Hungarians living there were advocating separatism, so Mečiar was effectively forced into cutting back on minority language rights in order to keep together his HZDS coalition with the SNS and the Association of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS).

This treatment by the Mečiar government of minority indigenous languages was to prove a real stumbling block for Slovakia in its accession talks with the European Union in 1998. The 1995 language law did not meet the requirements of the European Commission (or the support of MEPs). Then in 1999, the coalition government led by Mikuláš Dzurinda, ahead of an important meeting with European Commission officials that would have an effect on the timetable for accession, came up with a Minority Language Law. The effect of this particular law, which was as much to placate the European Union as it was to placate speakers of Hungarian, was to give equal status with Slovak to all minority languages in towns and villages where the minority comprised at least twenty per cent of the population according to the latest census. In such areas, the minority would be allowed to use their mother tongue in dealings with local or state government officials (even if that was not to be communicated widely to the population affected) and road signs would be in their language as well as in Slovak. The Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK) had argued for their native language to be permitted in areas where the minority amounted to just ten per cent of the population whereas the HZDS opposed even the twenty per cent limit as being too generous towards minority language groups. Self-styled “nationalists” expressed fears that the new law would once again encourage Hungarian separatism in southern Slovakia. Dzurinda was walking a tight rope in an attempt to satisfy the minimum recommendations of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in

Europe (OSCE) and at the same time to fend off accusations within Slovakia that he was giving in to Hungarian demands.

The European Parliament was told that the Hungarian minority in Slovakia were fearful that their social, cultural and economic development would be restricted – even with the 1999 Language Law. Solutions were never simple, according to the Belgian speaker in the debate, as Belgium itself demonstrated because there ‘language laws have been unable to solve the problems between the peoples’. What it would take was ‘education from the top down’ and more autonomy if minorities were to give something back to the community, and not just end up being labelled as problems.²⁴

The PPE-DE Group was convinced²⁵ that ‘central European countries are welcome in the European Union’. It was this Group’s view that the Hungarians in Slovakia or Romania, for example, were ‘hoping that we will not slam the door to our community of values in the European Union in their face’. In his speech, the spokesperson also referred to the very sizeable minority of Salesians in Poland who were now able to worship in both their own and the Polish language. A welcome should be extended to the European Union, he said, so long as the conditions ‘needed by our community of values’ have been met.

Further assertions were made that the treatment of the Hungarian minority both in Slovakia and in Romania was not as good in practice as it appeared to be on paper and there was, therefore, an urgent need for the Commission to communicate with these people in their own language rather than leaving it to governments to do the communication. Of special concern was the treatment meted out in most countries to the Roma people who were being condemned to live in ‘third-world situations which were on a par with the worst slums in Africa and in third-world cities’.²⁶ Yet only a day later, Slovakia was held up as a model for all current Member States to emulate in having authorised the use of many different regional languages in its own country.²⁷ But the Roma and Hungarian minorities were described by another MEP²⁸ as not being ‘favoured’ by a majority of the population of Slovakia, where ‘a time bomb is ticking away unnoticed under the [European Union’s] enlargement plans’.

The difference between what appears in official documents for wider public consumption and what happens in reality “on the ground” as far as minority languages were concerned re-surfaced in Parliament in October of 2001. Then attention was drawn ²⁹ to deficiencies in the implementation of the 1999 law bestowing certain rights for a language minority to receive official communications in their own language in areas where they comprise at least twenty per cent of the inhabitants. This law was working favourably for Slovaks, it was claimed; yet when three quarters of the population of the same village was Hungarian the latter were able to obtain official documents in Slovakian only and even the local mayor was not permitted to speak in Hungarian during public or official functions, it was alleged. Despite these claims, the Commission ³⁰ repeated its satisfaction at the progress being made in Slovakia to protect the use of minority languages and particularly at the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Commission’s assessment – as outlined to MEPs in the Chamber – was that Slovakia was desirous of giving the greatest possible freedom to the Hungarian population in accord with that European Charter, but it did concede that ‘considerable efforts are still required for the practical enforcement of all the existing legislation’.

Further follow-up Questions in Parliament were directed to the Commission some months later requesting information as to the Commission’s plans having regard to the ‘shortcomings previously noted’ ³¹ in the way the 1999 Language Law was being put into effect. On that occasion, the Commission told Parliament it was still closely monitoring the matter and was busy evaluating all the demographic data supplied to it by the Slovak authorities.

The Commission was prepared to acknowledge that national minorities in Slovakia did not always make full use of their rights because of a lack of valid information available to the public about the law on the use of minority languages. And, almost a year later, near the beginning of 2003, the conditions facing the Roma people in Slovakia was again raised in the debates. In this instance one Member ³² reported on a visit he had made to Bratislava and Košice with a Parliament delegation. What they had observed was a lack of mother tongue teaching for Roma and the absence of any Roma teachers and this led the Member to ask whether, since respect for minority languages and cultures was a criterion for membership of the European Union, was

this respect being seriously independently monitored in Slovakia and if so by whom and how. Commissioner Verheugen was at pains to point out to those in the Chamber that the situation of Roma in the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania had been the issue that he, and indeed the Commission as a whole, had worked most intensively on. It was, he reminded Members, a political precondition for concluding enlargement negotiations that candidate countries develop a 'strategy to reduce discrimination against the Roma'. More significantly, though, he commented (maybe not to the pleasure of all listening):

'First and foremost I must remind you [Members of the European Parliament] that discrimination against Roma is not only a sad fact of life in the future Member States, but that unfortunately we also find this in a whole series of current Member States. It is just that it is not as noticeable in the figures because there are not as many of them in the Member States.'³³

Verheugen's assurances did not satisfy all of the MEPs, however. The division of Slovakia into provinces had gone ahead, declared one who was a member of the delegation for relations with Slovakia, taking 'absolutely no account of the fact that the southern edge of Slovakia is Hungarian speaking and that most people there want to have administration and education in that language'.³⁴ Furthermore, the Roma-dominated villages in the east of the country were 'still administered by a Slovakian elite that thinks that street lighting, waterworks and parks are only for themselves', he wrote.

There is little doubt that the survival and integrity of the state language, Slovak, was important to the Slovakian government. In 2001, the Slovakian Ministry of Culture was charged by the government with the conservation and development of Slovak as a *spiritual* part of the national cultural heritage. [My emphasis]³⁵

‘National minorities which become a majority often appear to have no understanding for the other language groups within the territory of their state... Only through an agreement based on equality can two peoples find a way to live peacefully as good neighbours. In that respect, much can be learned from the government structures of multi-lingual federal states such as Belgium, Switzerland and Spain.’ – Erik Meijer (NL)

The report on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Croatia and the European Union presented ³⁶ to Parliament by rapporteur Alexandros Baltas in December 2000 noted with satisfaction that Croatia had ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, adding that Croatia was deserving of ‘our support and encouragement along its chosen road to economic and political reform’.

Laws that had been passed earlier in the same year in the Croatian Parliament confirmed the Croatian language and the Latin script to be “in official use in the Republic”. At the same time the status of minority languages and alphabets and their official use at a local level were also regulated. So that while Croatian was the state language, another language and Cyrillic or some other script was allowed to be introduced into official use alongside Croatian and the Latin script. Linguistic minorities were not large in numbers in Croatia but there was provision for teaching in minority languages in schools and regular news programmes in minority languages on radio and television. These regulations were particularly designed for areas where minority language groups were concentrated, such as the use of the Serbian language and the Cyrillic alphabet in East Slavonia or the use of Italian in Istria.

The issue of bilingualism in Istria and the rights of the Italian-speaking population were in fact aired in the European Parliament in June 2001. This came as a result of action that had been taken by the Croatian Ministry of Justice to suspend a regional statute adopted on 9 April 2001 by the Regional Council of Istria which allowed for parity between Italian and Croatian in all the institutions of the Istrian region and in all the procedures of Istrian administrative bodies. The action by the Croatian Ministry of Justice, taken according to the Ministry to because the constitutionality of the Regional Council’s statute had yet to be confirmed, occurred just six weeks later.

The Swedish Presidency of the Council was asked what action it would take ‘given that Italy’s status as a friendly nation and founder member of the European Union should ensure the existence of full Italian/Croatian bilingualism in the border areas’.³⁷

The Italian MEP who raised the matter in the Parliament, Guido Podestà, was concerned at the 'serious problems which would be created for the Italian-speaking population' and he demanded the right of the Italian-speaking minority in Croatia to have its cultural identity recognised by the European Council. The issue of respect for and protection of minorities resonated with the representative of the Swedish Presidency of the Council 'in particular', as it was considered an important issue by them.³⁸ Parliament was assured that the Council was carefully monitoring the linguistic issue in Croatia in its dealings with that country's government since 'respect for and protection of minorities' was a condition built into European Union policy towards those countries covered by the Stabilisation and Association Process in South Eastern Europe. Among the issues that required more action by the Croatian government, according to the Presidency, was the adoption of laws to protect minorities.

Podestà for his part, however, was not entirely re-assured that respect for multilingualism was actually properly provided for by the Croatian Constitution so calling into question Croatia's suitability for membership. Therefore, he asked another Question the next day, this time directed at the Commission, along the same lines as his earlier Question but also including a condemnation of Croatia's 'violation of the rights of cultural minorities'.³⁹ The Commission, in reply, expressed its confidence that 'access to education in minority languages and preservation of minority cultures'⁴⁰ would be honoured by the Croatian government as it had been made quite clear that these were important conditions of becoming a European Union Member State. The requirement for safeguards against discrimination of language minorities had been reiterated with the Croatian government, Parliament was told. Nevertheless, in the same debate, another Italian MEP⁴¹ requested that representations be made by the Swedish Presidency of the Council 'in the appropriate fora' to ensure that the Istrian regional statute would take effect in its original form.

Although the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia did not apply for full membership of the European Union until 2004, issues of linguistic diversity in that country were the subject of comment in the plenary debates during the fifth parliamentary term of the European Parliament.

The opportunities given to Albanians to attend university courses within the official Macedonian education system in their own language was described as a development deserving of ‘unqualified support’⁴² from the European Union. That was the view expressed by one Dutch MEP late in 2000 who lavishly praised the coexistence of the two largest distinct language groups in a country ‘despite all the problems’ that had had to be dealt with. It was viewed as a welcome positive development, a ‘breakthrough on an issue which has caused a great deal of problems for a long time’ and a ‘real step forward for Macedonia’. Above all, it was evidence to neighbouring Balkan countries that education could provide the foundation of a peaceful multi-ethnic society.

On the same day, the PSE Group through its spokesperson was prepared to support the Macedonian initiative because the Albanian-language institutions would assist in the promotion of ‘social cohesion in Macedonia and not create divisions’.⁴³ In a very pointed aside, the spokesperson drew a distinction between the philosophy of his Group and the mood of some others in the Chamber who – and he suggested they were in the majority – felt that ‘the smaller the unit, the more divided the systems, and the more separatist the movements, the better’. The Commission,⁴⁴ Parliament was told in the debate, had made it clear to the Macedonian Government that peaceful coexistence between Macedonians and Albanians would not be possible if permission was not given for higher education in the Albanian language to take place.

While perceptible progress was being made on the issue of linguistic diversity for Albanians living in Macedonia, the same could not be said for the Greek minority living in Albania. In particular, Parliament was told in the same month,⁴⁵ essential books for Greek lessons in the Greek schools were not being made available and there had been no action by the authorities on repeated requests for the re-opening of a Greek school at Chimara, which had been closed over fifty years previously. These events required intervention by the French Presidency of the Council, it was asserted in a Question – intervention because the Greek minority’s constitutional rights to an education in their mother tongue were being denied. The response, on behalf of the French Presidency of the Council, was hardly calculated to persuade the Albanian government to make immediate changes in their implementation of a constitutional law on human rights that had been adopted by them in March 1993 (and upheld in the

European Court of Justice). The Presidency merely acknowledged the allegations made by the Greek minority and described the creation of a region of stability founded on respect for minority rights as one of the European Union's 'prime objectives' in the western Balkans. Although Albania has not applied for membership of the European Union, a Stabilisation and Association Agreement – often regarded as the first step to membership – was concluded, after negotiations lasting more than three years between the two parties, in June 2006.

Macedonia was again singled out in the plenary debates, this time in 2001, by *rapporteur* Swoboda on the eve of the first signing of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with a Balkan country as having been, since its founding, 'extremely cooperative and constructive towards its neighbours and consequently also towards the European Union'.⁴⁶ Swoboda recognised that successive Macedonian governments, with the help of the European Union, had helped to meet some of the expectations of the large Albanian minority, particularly in the field of higher education as was evidenced by the opening of the University of Tetovo. The expectation now was that all involved should work towards greater recognition of the Albanian language. But the *rapporteur's* enthusiasm was certainly not shared by two Members from the GUE/NGL Group⁴⁷ who described the Swoboda report as 'unsatisfactory' and demanded that the Albanian language be recognised as an official language of Macedonia, 'from primary school to university and also in the public services'. The two believed that the European Union could try to have the Macedonian Constitution amended to meet the expectations of the Albanians on this issue. In fairness to Swoboda, he had acknowledged in his speech in the Chamber that the Albanian population in Macedonia would not think enough had been achieved. To use his own words: 'Greater recognition of the Albanian language... is certainly called for'.

The status of Macedonian vis-à-vis other languages in the country was determined by the Constitution and by the 1998 Law on the Use of the Macedonian Language. The Constitution, as adopted on 17 November 1991, provided for the Macedonian language, written using its Cyrillic alphabet, to be the official language in the Republic of Macedonia. However, the same Article [17] of the Constitution did allow for a language and alphabet of another nationality to be 'in official use' where the

majority or a considerable number of the inhabitants in a unit of local self-government were of that nationality, but ‘under conditions and in a manner determined by law’. In addition, the linguistic identity of nationalities was guaranteed [Article 48] as was the right of nationalities to be instructed in their own language in primary and secondary schools – again ‘as determined by law’ – and discrimination on the grounds of language in the restriction of freedoms and rights was specifically outlawed [Article 54]. In 2001, in a law reminiscent of a Slovakian language law referred to above in this Chapter, the Ohrid Framework Agreement decreed that in the units of local self-government where at least twenty per cent of the population spoke a language other than Macedonian then that language and its alphabet would be used as an official language. That is, an official language in addition to the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet.

While the goal of Macedonian Radio Television as a Public Broadcasting Service was to foster the use of the Macedonian language and the Cyrillic alphabet in radio and television programmes, there existed a second channel. This second channel of Macedonian Radio Television was, according to the Macedonian Government, completely open to programmes in the languages of the cultural communities, such as Albanian, Turkish, Serbian, Romany or Vlach. Nevertheless, in mid 2001, the Swedish Presidency of the Council was moved ⁴⁸ to tell Parliament that it believed that greater recognition of the Albanian language ought to include the immediate establishment of a third television channel for minority languages and the ratification of the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages.

But six weeks later, one Dutch Member, in a written declaration, alleged that there was significant opposition within Macedonia to having Albanian as the ‘language and administration and education for that part of the country where the Albanian-speakers live’. ⁴⁹ The only practical lasting solution, therefore, was the implementation of an arrangement similar to that which existed in his own neighbouring country of Belgium. He concluded by wishing ‘the Council and Commission much success in their attempts at long last to ensure that their interference does not lead to more violence and suppression, but to a peaceful solution which is sustained by all the parties’.

The same Member repeated this view of the problems attendant to linguistic diversity in Macedonia three months later,⁵⁰ with the multi-lingual structures of Switzerland and Spain also being proffered as templates on that occasion. The language of the large Albanian majority had, after all, maintained the Member, been the language of administration and education in the north-west of the country within the former Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, a language right that had been suspended when Macedonia achieved its independence. There were parallels, he told Parliament, with the situation in Slovakia in that it was another illustration of national minorities which become a majority often appearing 'to have no understanding for the other language groups within the territory of their state'. The same Member was certainly persistent in advocating his cause. Later in the year he was writing again. On this occasion it was of his hopes that changes to the Macedonian constitution would signal the end of the idea that 'within the borders of that country, there is only room for one language and one nation, and that all problems would be solved if the large Albanian minority were ignored, or even driven away'. It was another declaration of the "I told you so" kind:

'I stated that granting premature support to the Macedonian government, proclaiming desperate Albanians as extremists and distributing funds would not lead to answers, peace and reconciliation, but would fan the flames of violence.'⁵¹

Of all the countries outside the Member States of the European Union that were singled out for comment on the matter of linguistic diversity, much of it adverse it has to be said, in the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term, the most frequently referred to was Turkey.

Turkey had applied for full membership of the European Union in 1987 and by December 1999 had been confirmed as a candidate country. In 2000, the Commission recognised that Members of the European Parliament were concerned with the problems that Turkey seemed to have with the Kurdish language.⁵² Accession of Turkey was likely to be only 'in the distant future',⁵³ a Member of the GUE/NGL Group declared in writing; even further down the queue than Ukraine and Russia, while the Kurdish language was not permitted to be used in the administration, education or the media and the Kurdish people themselves continue to be 'displaced,

bombarded and suppressed'. An example of how uncompromising Turkish authorities were in matters of language was starkly brought home ⁵⁴ to European Union parliamentarians when, it was reported in the Chamber, one of their own, representing the same GUE/NGL Group at the congress of one of Turkey's Kurdish parties, HADEP, happened to say some words in Kurdish. Turkish police immediately stopped her from speaking in any language and it took some negotiations before she was allowed to pass on greetings to the congress from the Group in her mother tongue, German.

Parliament was told that the Turkish Government must accept ⁵⁵ that the country is made up of different national and cultural groups, all of which are entitled to the same rights. One of the priorities must be for the different languages of these constituent national groups to be accepted in the schools, particularly in Kurdish areas. When *rapporteur* Swoboda ⁵⁶ informed Parliament that the Helsinki European Council had formally recognised Turkey as a candidate for membership of the European Union, he emphasised that Turkey was in no different a position from any other candidate in that the Copenhagen criteria for membership had to be fulfilled before negotiations could begin.

One of the first steps Turkey had to take was to allow the use of the Kurdish language, including in the media, and 'the fostering of, and the opportunity to express, Kurdish identity'. He believed that Turkey ought to be given the opportunity to demonstrate that it was committed to 'follow the path towards Europe' and hoped that the European Parliament would adopt his proposal. It was pointed out during the debate that ensued that while amnesty had been granted to some criminals, amnesty had not been extended to people sentenced to imprisonment for talking in their own language; the Greek socialist Member declaring: 'Turkey's candidacy puts not just Turkey, but the European Union to the test. It is not just Turkey, ladies and gentlemen, which is sitting exams in order to become a member. In this particular case, the European Union is also sitting exams, in numerous subjects.' ⁵⁷ Indeed, it was asserted by another Member, the Turkish army was waging war against the Kurdish-speaking population.⁵⁸ In response to a Question on the protection of minorities and regional languages, ⁵⁹ the Swedish Presidency of the Council re-affirmed that all candidate countries were required to comply with the criteria that had been established at the

Copenhagen European Council in June 1993 and that negotiations would not commence unless the rights of minorities were agreed to.

The situation in Turkey was again discussed in Parliament in October of 2001, sparked by comment that in its drive to bring itself closer to European democratic standards, the ‘non-Turkish languages are no longer banned, but are not fully recognised’. ⁶⁰ Among those supporting dialogue with Turkey, there was a realisation that giving legitimate rights to the Kurdish population had to include their language being used in the official media. ⁶¹ However, the majority opinion in Parliament definitely seemed to be that, in its quest for accession, Turkey should be treated no differently from any other potential member in the enlargement process, especially as the ‘the Kurdish language has not been recognised’. ⁶² The very thought of removing just some of the restrictions on the use of Kurdish was appalling to one Member: ‘... the idea of partial removal of restrictions applied to a fundamental right such as the use of one’s own language is a quite horrific contradiction in terms.’ ⁶³ And, according to one written declaration, the relentless official Turkish government paranoia and consequent crackdown on “separatism” had resulted for the Kurds in their ‘language, songs and writings being punishable’. ⁶⁴

The Council and Commission statements on democratic rights in Turkey formed an item on Parliament’s agenda in late February 2002. On behalf of the Spanish Presidency of the Council, Ramón de Miguel ⁶⁵ reported the refusal of Turkish security forces to acknowledge that the Kurdish language as such even existed. The only national language was Turkish; and to promote other languages was viewed by Turkish authorities as promoting “separatism” or the disintegration of the country and lending active support to terrorist activity. He pointed to reports of ‘harsh’ treatment meted out by security forces to university students and parents of schoolchildren demanding the inclusion of Kurdish courses in the academic curriculum, all of which signified, as far as the Spanish Presidency was concerned, that ‘in the recognition of the cultural rights of minorities, Turkey is still falling short’.

De Miguel had referred earlier in his address to recent “reform” of the Constitution that had included the amendment of Article 26 – *‘No language prohibited by law shall be used in the expression and dissemination of thought. Any written or printed*

documents, phonograph records, magnetic or video tapes, and other means of expression used in contravention of this provision shall be seized...’ – leading to the removal of the ban on the use of other languages in Turkey. The Constitution [Article 42.9] had also forbidden any language other than Turkish from being taught as a mother tongue to Turkish citizens in teaching and learning institutions.

Those MEPs, from whatever Group, who contributed to the debate were united in their belief that the right to speak one’s own language was one of the most fundamental of human rights, together with the right to use that language in the media and the right to be taught in that language.⁶⁶ Parliament was urged to denounce the Turkish government for its attitude towards the Kurds. This particular speaker, a non-attached Spanish Basque representative, could not resist availing himself of the opportunity that presented itself to draw a parallel with the situation as he perceived it to be at home in Spain:

‘We ought to have the courage to denounce all governments – like the Turkish one – that threaten so many linguistic communities with extinction... Should we set a bad example with our own situation in the Basque country where our language has been considered at risk of disappearing?’⁶⁷

Noting that while Arabic, English, German and Chinese were able to be taught at Turkish institutions of higher education, one Member from the GUE/NGL Group, who were especially active in the plenary debates on issues relating to minority rights in Turkey, emphasised that Kurdish, which was the mother tongue of twelve million people, remained barred from the education system. Over ten thousand students who petitioned for Kurdish to be allowed had been charged with separatism and were facing criminal proceedings for presenting their petitions. Any peaceful and political solution to the Kurdish issue would have to ‘involve the lifting of the ban on the language and the incorporation of Kurdish as a subject in the curriculum’ said the Member. She strongly urged the Parliament to continue to endorse the Copenhagen criteria, including the right for an indigenous minority to be provided with native-language teaching and media to be a ‘non-negotiable condition for accession’.⁶⁸

One written comment⁶⁹ suggested that any MEPs who maintained that “progress” was being made in Turkey, despite the ‘still insurmountable obstacles to the Kurdish

culture and language', were doing so only because the *status quo* there makes it 'easier for them to exploit Turkey's market, its cheap labour and its geopolitical position'. It was important, urged a Member, for a majority of the European Parliament to send a clear message to Turkey 'that it will never acquire a place within the European Union as long as ethnic inequality and repression continue to exist'. Everyone in Turkey was being forced to 'bow to the dominant language and culture'.⁷⁰ What was termed the 'policy of oppression' against Kurdish people prompted further questioning during the plenary debates ⁷¹ in mid-2002 of the Commission which, for its part, agreed that the use of languages other than Turkish was a 'short-term priority' for the Commission. Furthermore, the decision by the Turkish Government to adopt a law that would ban the broadcasting of radio and television programmes in the Kurdish language was described as 'contrary to the country's constitution and Turkey's commitments to the [European Union]'.⁷² After all, the proposed law would prolong the ban on broadcasting radio and television programmes in Kurdish when the Turkish government had given an undertaking to lift the ban to take effect from the end of the previous month.

Did the Council regard this law as 'politically and legally consistent' with the Copenhagen criteria for accession? Replying on behalf of the Danish Presidency of the Council, Bertel Haarder was keen to assure MEPs that the Commission had reacted 'immediately' to the law in question. It had done so because the law did not meet the Copenhagen criteria and also because, by forbidding Turkish citizens from using their mother tongues in radio and television broadcasts, Turkey was not satisfying a pre-requisite of the accession partnership.

Criticism in the Chamber of restrictions enforced on the use of the Kurdish language continued into 2003.⁷³ Discussion of the Oostlander report afforded the opportunity to parliamentarians to assess the progress made by Turkey in its accession strategy. For the Greek Presidency of the Council,⁷⁴ the introduction of the right to use and teach minority languages was a 'big step forward' although the way recent regulations had restricted broadcasting and teaching in languages other than Turkish was not positive if accession negotiations were to actually start. Members of Parliament who contributed to the plenary debate were not overly optimistic for the future of these negotiations, especially if minorities were going to be institutionalised there. As one

British representative said: 'Every effort should be made to integrate minorities into the mainstream of a nation's life without denying them the right to express their own language or culture.' ⁷⁵

Furthermore, the position of the Kurdish language was viewed ⁷⁶ as evidence that Turkey lacked a real desire to find solutions to the conflict of nationalities within its borders. In light of this, it is, therefore, appropriate that the last word, in this fifth parliamentary term to 2003, on the severe restrictions the Kurds faced in using or listening to their own language whether that be in dealings with the government and its agencies, in employment, or in education and in the media should go to Erik Meijer:

'It is therefore good that Turkey cannot enter into preliminary negotiations about [European Union] membership without conditions, on the basis of the illusion that everything will automatically be better then.' ⁷⁷

What is very apparent is that the speakers in the plenary debates – as well as those who made written declarations – while expressing support for Turkey's eventual membership of the European Union did so only on condition that Turkey must fully comply with the criteria for accession that had been set out by the Copenhagen European Council in June 1993. These criteria stipulated, *inter alia*, that candidate countries must have created stable institutions that would guarantee respect for and protection of minorities. The size of Turkey and its strategic position in the Mediterranean, bordering as it did one of the most volatile regions of the world, were not sufficient to persuade Members of the European Parliament – and the Commission along with the succession of Presidencies of the Council during the years of the fifth parliamentary term – to make an exception for Turkey.

Whether the treatment within Turkey of the Kurds and their language would provide a convenient reason to delay any firm decision on the desirability of an essentially Islamist Turkey becoming a Member State of an essentially Christian union is sheer speculation if the written records of the plenary debates are taken at face value. There is no evidence in the written records of the plenary debates on matters of linguistic diversity to support a view that the treatment within Turkey of the Kurds and their language provided Members of the European Parliament with a ready-made and

convenient excuse to delay any firm decision on the desirability of one essentially Islamist country (namely, Turkey) becoming a Member State of what was (and is) an essentially Christian “confederation”.

Finally, Members of the European Parliament did not restrict themselves to commenting on issues of linguistic diversity within countries that were well on the road to becoming Member States of the European Union or even those countries that might have been regarded as being desirous of such membership.

Two MEPS had the situation in Algeria in their sights in 2001. Doubts were expressed in the Parliament as to whether the European Union should be entering into an agreement with Algeria to become a Treaty partner when the Berber population was being massacred. Human rights, including linguistic rights, were being ‘violated on a massive scale’, it was claimed in a very sarcastic speech from a Dutch Member of the ELDR Group.⁷⁸ In the region of Kabilya, the Amazigh language should be respected as one of the first steps in arriving at social justice, asserted another Member.⁷⁹ Almost eighteen months on a ‘new chapter’ in the relations between the European Union and Algeria was opened with the signing of an association agreement. The ‘important decision taken recently to give the Tamazight language the status of a national language’⁸⁰ meant that the Danish Presidency of the Council would not take any further action concerning Kabilya, Council representative, Claus Hjort Frederiksen, told the Parliament. And, on the matter of language recognition, the ‘approach taken recently on the question of the official recognition of Tamazight as a national language’ by the Algerian Government was labelled ‘conciliatory’ in Parliament by Commissioner Diamantopolou.⁸¹ The following year, in a speech to the European Parliament, Algerian President Bouteflika held up the constitutional amendment allowing Amazigh to be elevated to the status of a national language in his country as proof of Algeria’s respect for pluralism.⁸²

Four different MEPs addressed the issue of linguistic diversity in Moldova during 2002. Moldova, referred to as ‘the poorest country in Europe’ and contiguous to Romania, which itself became a full Member State of the European Union in 2007,

was described in the Parliament as ‘a sort of foster child to us’. ⁸³ Actions by the government in Moldova, which included the imposition of the Russian language on the Moldovan population as well as making ‘it compulsory to teach a Stalinist slant on history’, had sparked one military conflict in that country, it was claimed. The conflict, according to the Member, was only quelled within a few days because of a ‘broad social compromise’, but the Russian-leaning Moldovan Government had only succeeded in destroying the compromise and this led to further concern being expressed in the European Parliament and note taken of protests that had not only been directed against the Moldovan Government but were also ‘mainly in favour of Europe’. ⁸⁴

The Christian Democrats in the European Parliament made it clear that they adopted ‘fundamental issues’ ⁸⁵ like language and culture in their consideration of the situation in Moldova for which Europe had ‘a big responsibility’. They wanted the European Parliament to ‘stand up against neo-colonialist efforts’ ⁸⁶ currently being made to bring Moldova under Russian control through language. Months of mass demonstrations had continued in Moldova and speakers in the plenary debates were united that only Moldovan Government ‘withdrawal of all resolutions on the Russian language and on the teaching of history’ ⁸⁷ would bring about a peaceful solution to what amounted to a crisis. Discussion in the European Parliament of abuse of language rights in Eastern Europe even encompassed what was happening in the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan where knowledge of the Kyrgyz language, it was said, was being used as a criterion to ban candidates from standing in elections. ⁸⁸

Concern for the fate of those engaged in preserving indigenous languages extended also to countries far beyond the borders of Europe. For example, a call was made in Parliament ⁸⁹ for China to free Tibetans such as Tulku Tenzin Delek who was facing the death sentence for efforts to keep alive the Tibetan culture and religion. And in the context of debating in 2003 an association agreement with Chile, the government there was criticised for ‘taking little account of the minority which is descended from the indigenous American Indian population’. ⁹⁰ And in a “preview” of what the Latvian President was to tell Parliament later that same year [Refer to this Chapter above], two French MEPs condemned Russian domination in Chechnya which

included making compulsory the use of the Russian language in government matters.⁹¹

There is no doubt, as this Chapter has shown, that Members of the European Parliament who actually contributed to the plenary debates did not back away from adopting a very rigorous approach to questions of linguistic diversity in countries that were not current Member States. Support, translated into action, for laws and programmes facilitating linguistic diversity, especially in the cases of minority indigenous languages, was clearly expected of the governments of other states. Members of the European Parliament not merely desired effective policies that delivered a climate of linguistic diversity but actually demanded that such policies be in place in those countries that aspired to join the European Union. There is little wonder, therefore, at the frustration expressed by some Members of the European Parliament – as fully outlined in Chapter Five above – particularly from Spain and, to a lesser extent, from France and Italy who considered that a double standard was applied by parliamentarians on matters of linguistic diversity.

The frustration expressed by these particular Members is the result of the seemingly ready willingness of parliamentarians as well as the Commission and the Presidencies of the Council to condemn discrimination in the use and promotion of minority autochthonous languages in non-Member States. Frustration because the same bodies are unwilling to condemn, let alone to intervene directly to rectify the situation, when cases of discrimination in the use and promotion of minority autochthonous languages in Member States are brought to the attention of the European Parliament during the plenary debates. These particular Members feel strongly that the standard of respect for linguistic diversity that is applied in the case of non-Member States is a considerably more demanding standard than the one applied to existing Member States.

¹ Alfred Gomolka [PPE-DE] (DE) 3 October 2000

² Piia-Noora Kauppi [PPE-DE] (SU) 4 October 2000

³ http://www.einst.ee/factsheets/factsheets_uus_kuju/the_protection_of_human_rights

⁴ See for example: “Language Planning in the Former Soviet Union: The Case of Estonia”, *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* - Hans Dua, ed. (July, 1995), pp. 43-62; Introduction” (pp. 2-3), “Language and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Republics” (pp. 4-24),

and “National Revival and Competitive Assimilation in Estonia” (pp. 25-39), in “Post-Soviet Affairs” vol. 12, January-March, 1996; and “Russian Nationalism in Post-Soviet Estonia” in Justo G. Beramendi et. al “Nationalism in Europe: Past and Present” (Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 521-44.

⁵ The irony is that at the end of the nineteenth century Russian had replaced German as the official language in what is today Estonia and Latvia and in 1920 Bolshevik Russia recognised the independence of Estonia and Latvia with the local languages becoming “official” for the first time.

⁶ Section IIA of the United Nations Development Programme Report “Integrating non-Estonians into the Estonian Society: Setting the Course” prepared by Estonian scholars in 1997 includes these words: ‘... current claims of oppression And discrimination of non-Estonians are of no value if they do not include comparisons with the oppression of and discrimination against Estonians over the previous half century.’

<http://www.undp.org/execbrd/word/estextII.doc>

⁷ <http://www.eumap.org/journal/features/2002/jan02/languageereg>

Vadim Poleshchuk: “Estonia, Latvia and the European Commission: Changes in Language Regulation in 1999-2001”

See also - Vadim Poleshchuk and Boris Tsilevich: “The Baltic States before EU Accession: Recent Developments in Minority Protection” in “European Yearbook of Minority Issues Volume 2, 2002/3” – European Centre for Minority Issues – page 283

⁸ Paul Kolstø: “Russians in the Former Soviet Republics” Hurst and Company, London, 1995, page 102

⁹ Mart Rannut from the Tallinn Pedagogical University commented at the World Congress on Language Policies in Barcelona 16-20 April 2002: ‘The laws on language and citizenship adopted in 1995 signal the stability of the society and power consolidation, enabling to launch a new, nation-building-motivated language policy. The approach in legislation is non-ethnic and purely instrumental. It is possible for almost for all residents legally living in Estonia, regardless of their ethnicity, to apply and acquire Estonian citizenship if they wish to. Thus, neither ethnicity nor political identity have no major value in establishing one's position in Estonian society. Instead, proficiency of the common language is valued through the system of various domains (citizenship, employment, elections, etc.). In this way, those developments signal the transformation of the society to more democratic, open and civic.’

http://www.linguapax.org/congres/taller/taller3/article22_ang.html

¹⁰ The claim was made by Ina Druviete [“Sociolinguistic Situation and Language Policy in the Baltic States”, University of Latvia, Baltic Studies Programme, Riga, 2000, pages 20-21]: ‘Long-time group bilingualism is almost impossible if opportunity of access to the dominant language [i.e. Russian] is present and socio-economic factors motivate a shift to the dominant language. Some general factors facilitating access to the dominant language were: huge migration, universal schooling, exogamy, required military service, mass media, especially TV...’ Druviete, while at the Latvian Academy of Sciences and the Latvian Language Institute, assisted in the preparation of Latvian language policy. In 2004, she became Minister of Education and Science.

¹¹ John Joseph McCartin [PPE-DE] (IR) 17 May 2001

¹² Elisabeth Schroedter [Verts/ALE] (DE) 4 September 2001

¹³ Ole Krarup [EDD] (DA) 19 December 2002

¹⁴ Elisabeth Schroedter [Verts/ALE] (DE) 9 April 2003

¹⁵ Ioannis Patakis [GUE/NGL] (HE) 4 September 2003

¹⁶ Vaira Vike-Freiberga *President of Latvia*: ‘In my country of only 2.3 million inhabitants, more than a hundred organisations representing minority national cultures receive financial aid from the state. Following the reinstatement of Latvian independence in 1991, a national system of education, financed by the state, has been put in place, giving children the opportunity to go to primary schools that teach either in Latvian or in one of the eight minority languages, namely Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Belorussian, Hebrew, Romany,

Estonian and Lithuanian. Few countries in the world can boast of such an accomplishment... This Latvian policy is based on the conviction I have already expressed that diverse languages and cultures are among the greatest riches of our continent.' 9 October 2003

¹⁷ Regular Report from the Commission on Estonia's Progress towards accession, 8 November 2000, page 20

¹⁸ Regular Report from the Commission on Estonia's Progress towards accession, 13 November 2001, page 23

¹⁹ Estonia used the phrase: 'justified public interest'.

²⁰ Regular Report from the Commission on Latvia's Progress towards accession, 8 November 2000, page 23

²¹ Jan Wiersma [PSE] (NL) *rapporteur* 3 October 2000

²² Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE) 3 October 2000

²³ Carlo Fatuzzo [PPE-DE] (IT) 4 October 2000

²⁴ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE) 3 October 2000

²⁵ Hans-Gert Poettering (Pöttering) [PPE-DE] (DE): 'Our group has long favoured the first new countries' being able to take part in the next European elections in 2004, and rightly so. We must send out this message.' 13 June 2001

²⁶ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE): 'The European Union should be more than a market. It is also a community of citizens and, in addition, a collection of peoples and of smaller and larger cultural communities... what is written so neatly on paper and in laws appears, once again, not to bear any resemblance to reality.' 4 September 2001

²⁷ Carlo Fatuzzo [PPE-DE] (IT): 'This is an example we ought to follow in all Member States.' 5 September 2001

²⁸ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 5 September 2001

²⁹ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE) 2 October 2001

³⁰ Günter Verheugen 2 October 2001

³¹ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE) 11 April 2002

³² Robert J E Evans [PSE] (UK): 'I visited, albeit a year or so ago, Bratislava and Kosice with a parliament delegation and we looked at the conditions of the Roma people there. What I saw was that, despite the commitments of the government, the discrimination continues, partly because it seems to be ingrained in the society and almost institutionalised. There are poorer conditions for Roma people, fewer facilities, nowhere near the same number of opportunities and generally they are far more alienated from society, for example in schools where there was no evidence of mother-tongue teaching, no evidence of any Roma teachers at all.' 11 March 2003

³³ Günter Verheugen: '...we say that European Community law requires measures to be taken to put an end to this discrimination... In its pre-accession instruments the Commission addressed the needs of the Roma minorities in a big way. . It has deployed a great deal of money, made significant human resources available and provided considerable advice to help the future Member States to develop and also apply a strategy to combat discrimination against the Roma... I never let a visit to these countries go by without addressing this problem directly and on the spot.' 11 March 2003

³⁴ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 9 April 2003

³⁵ Interestingly, it was reported in February 2006 that the Slovakian Broadcasting Council fined Slovakian Television for broadcasting a film with the Czech puppets Spejbl and Hurvinek in the Czech language. The official State Language Law stipulated that films for children up to twelve years of age must be dubbed in Slovakian. Ondrej Dostal commented: "The Language Law dates from the times of nationalist fervour under head of government Vladimir Meciar when the aim was to show national minorities, namely the Hungarians, who was the boss. It's completely absurd to fine a TV station for broadcasting classic Czech fairytales in the Czech language at a time when every child in Slovakia understands Czech and when there's a large selection of children's programmes in the Czech language."

³⁶ Alexandros Baltas [PSE] (HE) *rapporteur* 12 December 2000

- ³⁷ Guido Podestà [PPE-DE] (IT) 12 June 2001
- ³⁸ Cristian Danielsson 12 June 2001
- ³⁹ Guido Podestà [PPE-DE] (IT): 'Can the Commission state its views on the compatibility of the negotiations on the association and stability partnership offered by the EU to Croatia... with this decision by the Croatian government, which is visibly contrary to the basic principles of the EU and its 'acquis' ...?' 13 June 2001
- ⁴⁰ Neil Kinnock 13 June 2001
- ⁴¹ Jas Gawronski [PPE-DE] (IT) 13 June 2001
- ⁴² Joost Lagendijk [Verts/ALE] (NL) 5 October 2000
- ⁴³ Johannes Swoboda [PSE] (OS) 5 October 2000
- ⁴⁴ Günter Verheugen 5 October 2000
- ⁴⁵ Mihail Papayannakis [GUE/NGL] (HE) 27 October 2000
- ⁴⁶ Johannes Swoboda [PSE] (OS) *rapporteur* 2 May 2001 Referring to Albanians agitating in Macedonia, he said: '... what none of us should accept – is that extremists and terrorists should use those aspirations that have not yet been met as an excuse for attacks and for murder. (*Applause*)... In a democracy, no one should bring bombs and murder to the negotiating table. Violence and terror tactics should not be rewarded.'
- ⁴⁷ Alain Krivine [GUE/NGL] (FR) and Roseline Vachetta [GUE/NGL] (FR) 3 May 2001
- ⁴⁸ Christian Danielsson 16 May 2001 This followed the seizure by Albanian 'extremists' of the village of Tanusevci on the border between Kosovo and Macedonia with resulting violent clashes between the 'extremists' and the army and police.
- ⁴⁹ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 4 July 2001
- ⁵⁰ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 4 October 2001
- ⁵¹ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL): 'A proportion of the Macedonian population and of the Macedonian government dreamed of a Macedonia without Albanians, or only with completely unrecognisable and adapted residents of Albanian origin.' 29 November 2001
- ⁵² Anna Diamantopoulou 4 October 2000
- ⁵³ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL): 'Present-day Turkey is an authoritarian state with superior military power, political prisoners, censorship, party bans, border conflicts and an electoral system that excludes minorities. Lessons still have not been learnt from the mass murder, eighty years ago, of the insurgent Armenians. That partly explains why people do not think it untoward that a different national minority is still being deprived of its rights to this day.' 15 November 2000
- ⁵⁴ Francis Wurtz [GUE/NGL] (FR) 29 November 2000
- ⁵⁵ Herman Schmid [GUE/NGL] (SV) 18 January 2001
- ⁵⁶ Johannes Swoboda [PSE] (OS) *rapporteur* 14 February 2001
- ⁵⁷ Giorgis Katiforis [PSE] (HE): 'Ladies and gentlemen, in the Middle Ages, Turkey and its army came knocking on Europe's door in Vienna. The door remained closed. Today Turkey is again knocking on our door, this time in peace, because over the intervening centuries, the real power has passed not to the advocates of military force but to the powers of liberty, democracy, rationalism and science. Herein lies the power of Great Europe and anyone who wants to share in Europe's greatness must truly espouse its principles; otherwise the door to Europe will remain firmly closed.' 14 February 2001
- ⁵⁸ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL): '... the inhabitants of Turkey are not participants with equal rights yet, because they... speak a different language' 14 February 2001
- ⁵⁹ Bernd Posselt [GUE/NGL] (DE) 15 February 2001 Posselt was eager to point out at the time that 'Sweden and its neighbour Finland have introduced a range of exemplary measures to protect minorities'.
- ⁶⁰ Alain Lamassoure [PPE-DE] (FR) *rapporteur* 24 October 2001
- ⁶¹ Johannes Swoboda [PSE] (OS): 'On the issue of Kurdish rights too, much remains to be done. It is obvious that the language, which, thanks to constitutional amendments, can now be used, should also be employed in the official media as soon as possible.' 24 October 2001

But on 15 May 2002, the same Member, having returned from Turkey as part of a delegation to campaign for the rights of Kurdish people, conceded that ‘their [the Kurdish] language and so on are not, perhaps, sufficiently provided for...’

⁶² Feleknas Uca [GUE/NGL] (DE) 24 October 2001

⁶³ Giovanni Fava [PSE] (IT): ‘I am appalled by this idea of partial removal of restrictions...’ 24 October 2001 From the same Group, Carlos Carnero González (ES) added: ‘It is not enough to lift the restriction of using a language if this is upheld in law and there is no recognition of the existence of a Community as a people in their own right. This is the case with the Kurds.’

⁶⁴ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 25 October 2001

⁶⁵ Ramón de Miguel: ‘... the recent demonstrations by university students and parents of schoolchildren demanding the inclusion of Kurdish language courses in the academic curriculum have been harshly dealt with by the security forces...’ 27 February 2002

⁶⁶ Joost Lagendijk [Verts/ALE] (NL) 27 February 2002

⁶⁷ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES) 27 February 2002

⁶⁸ Feleknas Uca [GUE/NGL] (DE) 27 February 2002

⁶⁹ Efstratios Korakas [GUE/NGL] (HE) 28 February 2002

⁷⁰ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL): ‘In a democratic state, political and ethnic minorities have rights, too. This is still not the case in Turkey.’ 28 February 2002

⁷¹ Matti Wuori [Verts/ALE] (SU) 13 June 2002

⁷² Mihail Papayannakis [GUE/NGL] (HE) 3 July 2002

⁷³ Feleknas Uca [GUE/NGL] (DE) 13 May 2003 Interestingly, in discussing the Oostlander report in Parliament [see below], while again critical of the Turkish authorities’ treatment of the Kurds, she had this to say about the solid foundation of Judeo-Christian “values” trumpeted in Europe: ‘I find it unspeakable that the [Oostlander] report refers to the humanist and Judeo-Christian culture of Europe, making out that Europe has always been a stronghold of democracy, the rule of law, human and minority rights, and freedom of religion and conscience. It patronisingly adds that an Islamic country too can accept and defend these values. Completely aside from the fact that Islam too has always played a part in Europe, I would like to recall, as a German especially, that the values that are allegedly so typically European are not quite so deeply rooted in Europe. European history ranges across the Christian crusades to the crimes of the colonial era – not to mention the horrors of fascism.’ 4 June 2003

⁷⁴ Tassos Yannitsis 4 June 2003

⁷⁵ Geoffrey Van Orden [PPE-DE] (UK): ‘Every effort should be made to integrate minorities into the mainstream of a nation’s life without denying them the right to express their own language or culture.’ 4 June 2003

⁷⁶ Nelly Maes [Verts/ALE] (BE): ‘The position of the Kurdish language... is evidence of the fact that they do not want a political solution to this important conflict of nationalities.’ 4 June 2003

⁷⁷ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 5 June 2003

⁷⁸ Bob van den Bos [ELDR] (NL): ‘Once again, our courageous foreign affairs ministers have decided to put their heads in the sand... However, neither the oil interests, nor the current negotiations are enough to keep the gross human rights violations under wraps... Cultural, linguistic, but mainly social rights must be recognised if Algeria wishes to become a Treaty partner.’ 17 May 2001

⁷⁹ Yasmine Boudjenah [GUE/NGL] (FR) 17 May 2001

⁸⁰ Claus Hjort Frederiksen 9 October 2002

⁸¹ Anna Diamantopoulou 9 October 2002

⁸² Abdelazizsa Bouteflika *President of Algeria* 3 June 2003 The President could not resist the temptation afforded by this opportunity before the Parliament to castigate Algeria’s former colonial master and the other signatories to the Treaty of Rome: ‘Was it not an omen that the Treaty of Rome was signed by a France which had full and entire sovereignty over an Algeria

which was already into its third year of the war of national liberation and which was nevertheless still divided into three French *départements*? Was there, at that time, a single signatory State to the Treaty of Rome which had the good taste and presence of mind to express reservations in favour of our country which was occupied and struggling to gain national liberty?’

⁸³ Elisabeth Schroedter [Verts/ALE] (DE): ‘... the Communist government knew that it was playing with fire ...’ 14 March 2002

⁸⁴ Jan Wiersma [PSE] (NL): ‘the government has made a huge mistake by presenting controversial proposals which, precisely in the areas of language and the teaching of history...’ 14 March 2002

⁸⁵ Lennart Sacrédeus [PPE-DE] (SV) 14 March 2002

⁸⁶ Bernd Posselt [PPE-DE] (DE) 14 March 2002

⁸⁷ Elisabeth Schroedter [Verts/ALE] (DE) 11 April 2002

⁸⁸ John Bowis [PPE-DE] (UK) 14 March 2002

⁸⁹ Thomas Mann [PPE-DE] (DE) 19 December 2002

⁹⁰ Erik Meijer [GUE/NGL] (NL) 12 February 2002

⁹¹ Alain Krivine [GUE/NGL] (FR) and Roseline Vachetta [GUE/NGL] (FR) 3 July 2003

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PLENARY DEBATES: CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

‘Alberto Moravia called Europe’s culture ‘a reversible fabric, one side variegated, the other a single colour, rich and deep ...’. Languages are the substance this fabric is woven from. A strong multilingualism policy, backed by all the stakeholders, will ensure this wonderful fabric doesn’t fade’ – Leonard Orban

Linguistic Diversity – an issue thought worthy of contributing to by only a few?

In Chapter One the question was posed as to whether the themes of linguistic diversity as identified in the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term 2000 – 2003 might have been regarded as having only enough significance for just a few individual Members of the European Parliament to make a contribution – either orally or by written submission. Did many MEPs attach enough importance to issues of linguistic diversity to motivate them to actually contribute to the debates?

The greatest total number of contributions – 137 – to debates involving themes of linguistic diversity came not surprisingly from the Group of the European People’s Party [PPE-DE]. That is because as at September 2002, there were 234 MEPs in that particular grouping, fully fifty-nine more than the next largest grouping, and they comprised 37.4 per cent of all the MEPs. These 137 contributions were spread across all four years of the research period, with an even spread in 2001, 2002 and 2003. The greatest number of individual contributions in the Group were from Michl Ebner (IT) – eleven, although Bernd Posselt (DE) made seven. In addition, nine other MEPs made four or more contributions: Marielle De Sarnez (FR), Carlo Fatuzzo (IT), Concepció Ferrer (ES), Thomas Mann (DE), Maria Martens (NL), Doris Pack (DE), Roy Perry (UK), Guido Podestà (IT) and Theresa Zabell (ES). In fact, in all sixty

from this Group contributed to the plenary debates on this issue – a very high participation percentage of 25.6. Of the sixty individual contributions, Germany provided the most (thirteen), followed by Spain (ten), United Kingdom (six), Belgium and Portugal five each, and France and Italy four each. Another eight countries had representatives contributing to the debates.

The second largest total number of contributions came from the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance [Verts/ALE] with 85 despite this Group, made up of representatives from twelve of the Member States, comprising only 7.2 per cent of the MEPs in the Chamber. Moreover, 37.8 per cent of the individuals belonging to this Group contributed, the most prolific of them being two Spaniards – Josu Ortuondo Larrea (nineteen) and Miquel Mayol i Raynal (sixteen). There were also five or more contributions from Raina Echerer (OS), Neil McCormick (UK), Nelly Maes (BE), Elisabeth Schroedter (DE), Bart Staes (BE) and Eurig Wyn (UK).

Four other Groups had even higher percentage participation by their Members. From the Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party [ELDR] twenty of their fifty-two Members participated in the plenary debates on issues of linguistic diversity, representing 38.5 per cent. There were contributions across all four years and four or more came from Ole Andreasen (DA), Luciano Caveri (IT), Maria Sanders-ten-Holte (NL), Astrid Thors (SU) and Joan Vallvé (ES). There were three different contributors from both the Netherlands and Spain. In the case of the Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities [EDD], the participation of Members in the plenary debates was at 43.8 per cent. The seven who contributed were from three of the four countries represented in the Group: Denmark, France and the Netherlands. Jens-Peter Bonde (DA) and Paul Coûteaux (FR) were the principal contributors for this Group.

While their participation percentage of forty-two was slightly lower than that of the EDD Group, the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left [GUE/NGL] had sixty-five separate contributions to the plenary debates. Of these sixty-five, eighteen came from Erik Meijer (NL) alone, although Alexandros Alavanos (HE), Ilda Figueiredo (PT), Geneviève Fraisse (FR), Esko Seppänen (SU) and Feleknaš Uca (DE) each made four or more. The contributions from GUE/NGL

were across all years, but particularly in 2002 and 2003. Eight of the ten Member States with representatives in the Group participated, with France (seven) and Greece (five) being the most active.

The Group with the highest percentage of active participation on issues of linguistic diversity in the plenary debates was, unsurprisingly in light of its advocacy for the national sovereignty and national identity of individual Member States, the Union for Europe of the Nations Group [UEN]. This Group of twenty-two MEPs, which included representatives from four Member States, contributed thirty-one *verbali*, ten of which were from José Ribeiro e Castro (PT) and four from Seán Ó Neachtain (IR). The UEN Group was active mainly in 2000 and 2003.

With one hundred and seventy five Members from all fifteen Member States, the Group of the Party of European Socialists [PSE] was the second largest in the European Parliament. There were, in total, eighty one contributions to the debates from this Group across all years but particularly in 2000 and 2001. Representatives from the United Kingdom (eleven), Spain (six) and Greece (five) were the most actively involved, while in individual terms Gérard Caudron (FR), Neena Gill (UK), Ulpu Iivari (SU), Christa Prets (OS) and Johannes Swoboda (OS) contributed four or more *verbali* each. Just over one quarter (25.7 per cent) of all PSE Group Members actively contributed to the debates.

Then remaining “political group” in the Chamber comprised the non-attached Members, totalling thirty two from six different countries. With twenty-one contributions, largely made in 2002 and 2003, their participation was at 31.3 per cent, with Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso (ES) responsible for more than one third of them.

These figures show a very high participation rate for Members of the European Parliament in the plenary debates on issues of linguistic diversity. Bearing in mind that two political groups, PPE-DE and PSE, alone accounted for just over sixty five per cent of all the MEPs and these two Groups had an active participation of 25.6 and 25.7 per cent respectively, it is clear that these issues were of interest to not merely the very few. Obviously, the statistics do not, and can not, measure the length (strict

time limits on speeches were rigorously enforced), strength and, most importantly, the validity of these contributions because such criteria are totally subjective and on which the number of opinions would equal the number of people reading the contributions. What the statistics categorically do show, however, is that issues of linguistic diversity were not the preserve of zealots only but drew a responsive chord across all Groups in the Chamber, with one hundred and ninety six Members (or thirty one per cent) deliberately choosing to directly join in the plenary debates on these issues.

Table 7.1 Most prolific contributors on issues of linguistic diversity to the plenary debates 2000 – 2003

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS	MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	POLITICAL GROUP	MEMBER STATE
19	Josu Ortuondo Larrea	Verts/ALE	Spain
18	Erik Meijer	GUE/NGL	Netherlands
16	Miquel Mayol i Raynal	Verts/ALE	Spain
11	Michl Ebner	PPE-DE	Italy
10	José Ribeiro e Castro	UEN	Portugal

Table 7.2 Participation percentage of contributions by political groups on issues of linguistic diversity to the plenary debates 2000 – 2003

POLITICAL GROUP	PPE-DE	PSE	ELDR	GUE/ NGL	Verts/ ALE	UEN	EDD	NI
NUMBER OF MEPS AS AT 16 SEPTEMBER 2002	234	175	52	50	45	22	16	32
NUMBER OF MEPS CONTRIBUTING	60	45	20	21	17	13	7	10
PARTICIPATION PERCENTAGE	25.6	25.7	38.5	42.0	37.8	59.1	43.8	31.3

Debates involving linguistic diversity were not invariably relegated to the very end of a week of plenary debates, as some sort of afterthought. Indeed, as Appendix One clearly shows, debates on topics involving the issues of linguistic diversity regularly began early in the week – Monday or Tuesday – and often continued through until the close of the session on Thursday.

In 2000, when debates were held also on a Friday, these issues were aired on Wednesday 12 April to Friday 14 April, Tuesday 5 September to Friday 8 September, Tuesday 3 October to Thursday 5 October, Tuesday 14 November and Wednesday 15 November, for example.

The pattern continued in 2001, with debates involving issues of linguistic diversity taking place on Monday to Thursday 14 – 17 April; and Tuesday to Thursday 13 – 15 February, 13 – 15 March, 3 – 5 July, 4 – 6 September and 23 – 25 October.

2002 was the year when matters of linguistic diversity were invoked more often by MEPs than in any other year of the fifth parliamentary term and once again these debates were not just reserved to Thursday, the last day of the plenary week. For example, there was discussion involving linguistic diversity Monday to Thursday 4 – 7 February, 11 – 14 March, 13 – 16 May, and 10 – 13 June; and Tuesday to Thursday 15 – 17 January, 9 – 11 April, 3 – 5 September and 17 – 19 December.

2003 was notable for fewer but more intensive debates involving this subject, with generally more contributions made on a day when linguistic diversity was under discussion. Examples of this are apparent on Monday to Thursday 7 – 10 April; Monday and Tuesday 20 – 21 October; Tuesday and Wednesday 4 – 6 June; and Wednesday and Thursday 3 – 4 September.

As outlined in Chapter One above the particular data set for this thesis did not allow for a comprehensive evaluation of the tone of the contributions to the plenary debates. Therefore, no generalisations can be validly made about the tone. However, it is clear from the text that a limited number of contributions were noteworthy because they

were not typical. Indeed, fewer than twenty might be said to be very impassioned contributions from the over five hundred and fifty *verbali* selected for this research. Three of these were delivered by Paul Coûteaux (FR) and were highlighted in Chapter Four above. He was calling for Members to be able to work in their own language in the Parliament and he roundly rejected the use of any “pivot language” which, according to him, would ‘naturally be English, or rather, American English’,¹ but the objects of his scorn were even more wide-ranging! Later that year, he again expressed his total opposition to the increasing use of just one language – arguing that he was one of many who did not want English to become the sole language of Europe.² In March of the following year, he turned his attention once again to his *bête-noir*, what he termed ‘this American empire to which we Europeans, like cowards, have been handing the keys to the world for years’.³ Europeans seemed fascinated, he asserted, by the culture and images of Americans and their language. But he was by no means alone in wanting all the European Union “working languages” to be treated equally.⁴

A number of the very impassioned speeches came from the advocates of minority autochthonous languages, particularly Catalan and Basque. The latter’s cause was vigorously represented by Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso (ES) – ‘the most elementary rights of the Basque people, namely language... thoroughly denied’⁵ while in 2003 the arrest of eight Basque cultural leaders signalled to the Member ‘a new round of repression aimed at the two main pillars of Basque society: its language and culture’.⁶ The cause of the Basque language, Euskera, was also supported by Josu Ortuondo Larrea (ES). He spoke very strongly in 2003 against the prohibition on Basque prisoners on studying and taking examinations at the only university that offered education in the Basque language⁷ and against the closure of the daily newspaper, *Egunkaria*, which was, he said, the only source of news written in a ‘minority *national* language’ [My emphasis].⁸ However, the impact on Spanish society of the ETA organisation could also draw harsh and emotional response, and to the applause of other Members in the Chamber.⁹ Persecution for simply speaking a different language had been condemned in the strongest terms, along with racism and neo-Nazism, by a German Member early in the fifth parliamentary term because ‘Europe has a vocation to be a multicultural Europe’.¹⁰

Reference has already been made above to the distaste of UEN Group Members for the imposition of any ‘state-led political superstructure when there is no such thing as a single European people’. José Ribeiro e Castro (PT), in a fiery speech, was adamant that no one wanted ‘to give up the democratic essence of their own country, their own language and culture’. ¹¹

Educational policies to satisfy the demands of ‘big business’ and the ‘capitalist market’, ¹² and assertions that European Union institutions, the “eurocracy”, ‘are systematically riding roughshod over the *subsidiarity* principle’ ¹³ were other topics that roused the ire (and fire) of Members.

Is It A Case Of Falling On Deaf Ears?

‘Europe is often accused of being like Babel because of its too many languages. But Babel is not about the number of languages spoken. It is about the inability to understand and construct a living space together’ – Ján Figel’

‘Languages are an essential means to allow the European citizens to fully exert their rights and participate in a democratic European society’ – Leonard Orban

Has the European Commission accepted the urgings and challenges set by Members of the European Parliament during its fifth term to make linguistic diversity more than just a pipe dream? Or is the reality the dream has all but dissipated? Has the European Commission taken on board the sentiments expressed during the plenary debates between 2000 and 2003 and has there been an ongoing commitment since, from the Commission, to translate the majority views of those parliamentarians into action?

According to the Europa Languages and Europe website,¹⁴ multilingualism was created as a separate Commission portfolio on 1 January 2007 to reflect its political dimension in the European Union given the importance of multilingualism for ‘initial

education, lifelong learning, economic competitiveness, employment, justice, liberty and security’.

If, as is proclaimed loudly and proudly, not only in the European Union’s official documents but also – as indicated in earlier chapters of this thesis – by Members of the European Parliament in the plenary debates, the European Union is founded upon the principle of diversity of cultures, customs and beliefs, then linguistic diversity is, *ipso facto*, incorporated in its foundation.

In December 2007, all twenty-seven Member States signed the Treaty of Lisbon, which guarantees that the European Union will respect its cultural and linguistic diversity as well as safeguard and enhance its cultural heritage. The signing of the Lisbon Treaty by all Heads of State or Government follows on logically from the adoption in 2000 – as referred to in earlier Chapters – of Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibiting discrimination based on language and of Article 22 of the same Charter requiring Member States to respect linguistic diversity. These Articles were effectively all about respect for individuals and tolerance of the cultures of others thereby confirming linguistic diversity as a core value of the European Union, and applicable whatever the particular language family. The current twenty-three official languages of European Union countries alone include languages from the Indo-European, Finno-Ugric and Semitic families, and, in addition, there are the indigenous regional and minority languages such as Basque (Euskera) to be taken into account.

Multilingualism Commissioner Leonard Orban (from Romania) introduces the *raison d’être* for his portfolio this way:

‘Languages are fundamental for Europeans wanting to work together. They go to the very heart of the unity in diversity of the European Union. We need to nurture and promote our linguistic heritage in the Member States but we also need to understand each other, our neighbours, our partners in the [European Union]. Speaking many languages makes businesses and citizens more competitive and more mobile.’¹⁵

A statement was issued in mid December 2006 to coincide with the impending “arrival” of Bulgarian, Romanian and Irish as official languages of the European Union on January 1 of the following year. It was issued by Orban’s predecessor in the role – at the time with the title of European Commissioner in charge of Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism – in which the Slovakian Ján Figel’ noted that the European Commission had adopted what he termed a strategy for the needs of translation and interpretation. It was a strategy born out of the implementation of the action plan that had been adopted by the Commission in 2004 (and confirmed in 2005). The aim had been to guarantee multilingualism in the Commission’s written communication by bringing the ever-increasing demand for translation under control. “Under control” meant establishing priorities for certain types of documents – known as ‘core’ – and placing restrictions on the length of these documents. That guarantee of multilingualism was important, according to Figel’ because in his words:

‘The diversity of languages is our common richness and the promotion of this diversity is a clear priority for the European Commission. Next year’s 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome will also be a celebration of multilingualism, as it has been one of the core principles of the Union since its foundation.’¹⁶

In order to make the strategy sustainable into the future and adaptable to varying levels of demand as well as being cost effective, without at the same time reducing the quality of the standard of translation of the current official languages and any new official languages that might be added, new elements had been added. These new elements in the strategy were the incorporation of language issues within the policy-making process of the Commission, web translation, balancing of internal and external translation work and closer cooperation between the institutions of the European Union. At the same time, Figel’ was confident that the new strategy would mean that the introduction of the three official languages – Bulgarian, Romanian and Irish – would result in no increase in the cost for the public. The cost for translation in the Commission for 2007 was estimated at about € 302 million or € 0.63 per European Union citizen per year, while the overall 2006 cost of translation in all the institutions was estimated at € 800 million. The cost of interpretation per citizen, according to Figel’, was not expected to rise either, the latest figure available being € 190 million

(for all the European Union institutions) in 2005 at the equivalent of € 0.42 per citizen per year.

Almost three months earlier, Figel' had made clear how it was of 'crucial importance' that citizens of the European Union have the possibility to learn more languages and so 'broaden their understanding of other cultures'.¹⁷ This was a priority for the European Union as was provision for citizens to use their mother tongue in their dealings with the European institutions. Figel' acknowledged that the Commission saw both priorities as important to achieving the goal of deepening 'connections between Europeans and their attachment to the European institutions'. Linguistic diversity was an asset to be safeguarded and promoted, he reiterated, and he reminded his audience that multilingualism was at the very heart of European integration and the peaceful coexistence that Member States had enjoyed since the end of World War II. Turning to the economic benefits of linguistic diversity, Figel' observed what Members of the European Parliament had articulated during the fifth parliamentary term [Refer to Chapter Three above], namely that multilingualism is essential to the fostering of knowledge and innovation as well as creating better employment opportunities by virtue of increased labour mobility. While the learning of others' languages is indeed expensive for individual citizens and for society as a whole, nevertheless this learning would always be a very good investment for all concerned.

In response to the question to provide an example of what the European Commission had done to help preserve and foster Europe's languages, Figel' unhesitatingly pointed to the Commission's adoption in the previous November (of 2005) of a Communication on the subject of multilingualism. What the Communication did, asserted Figel', was to 'set out a new framework and basis for multilingualism by presenting the whole spectrum of language use' in the European Union. Other examples he cited at the time were the research programmes that also addressed multilingualism (and entailed about € 20 million of expenditure per year) and the decision to declare 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

On his webpage, Ján Figel' makes reference to the decision by President Barroso, in 2004, to include "Multilingualism" as part of a portfolio for the first time in the history of the Commission and how this very action itself was a clear indication of the

importance given to multilingualism by the new Commission. Figel' affirms his pride in having developed a new framework for a multilingualism policy since 2004. Noting the transfer of the multilingualism portfolio to Leonard Orban, effective from 1 January 2007, Figel' pledges to continue to give his full contribution to the promotion of multilingualism for it is a 'permanent value'¹⁸ of the European Union.

At a meeting with the Culture Committee of the European Parliament on 27 February 2007,¹⁹ Orban began his address by quoting the Czech proverb "You live a new life for every new language you speak. If you know only one language, you only live once". Multilingualism had been, according to Orban, part of what he quaintly termed the 'genetic code' of the European Union since its inception – as clearly evidenced by Regulation 1 of 1958 (referred to in previous chapters above). It was his intention, Orban told the Committee, to outline, by means of a Communication, a new strategy on Multilingualism in the second half of 2008. There were to be three strands of action. The first of these was ensuring that languages were recognised as an 'integral part of lifelong learning' so resulting in 'effective intercultural dialogue'. The second strand was to facilitate a 'European political dialogue' by harnessing multilingual communication with the citizens of the European Union. The third strand of his proposed strategy, which he hoped would not be seen as the least important of the three, was to use multilingualism as a way of making the economies of Member States more competitive in world markets and the workers themselves from these States more employable. For the strategy to be successful, cognisance would have to be taken of academic research already undertaken to identify best practice in improving language teaching. This did not mean that the Commission bureaucracy intended to ride roughshod over the exercise of the principle of *subsidiarity*, but rather the aim was to highlight successful teaching methods that could be considered as being worthy of replication in addition to the local traditional pedagogical methods.

Orban reminded the meeting that as from 2007 all Lifelong Learning Programmes would provide financial support for regional and minority language projects, not just for national language projects. The rationale for the strategy was that learning languages was the only way of moving from 'a multi-cultural society to a truly intercultural one', said Orban. 2008 was to be designated the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue" and, to this end, a number of intellectuals and practitioners of

multilingualism would be gathered together in order to establish what contribution multilingualism was to make to 2008 and to the years following. The conclusions reached by this “taskforce” were to be presented in seven months time, the new Commissioner told the Culture Committee, and he indicated that a ministerial conference on multilingualism would probably be organised at the beginning of 2008 as well. Orban promised action, and at the same time proffered the opinion that ‘languages should not be seen as a hurdle but a fascinating tool for communication’.

A few days earlier, Orban had issued a press statement ²⁰ that proclaimed that the creation, as from the first of January that year, of multilingualism as a separate portfolio was, in fact, a reflection of its political dimension since multilingualism was important for lifelong education, economic competitiveness, employment and, indeed, freedom. The same press statement claimed a ‘significant horizontal dimension’ for the multilingualism portfolio because of the close interaction that would take place with a range of other policies of the European Union including not only the obvious ones such as culture, education and communication but also policies such as liberty and security. Orban clearly believed that the new portfolio was evidence of the increased importance attached to linguistic diversity by the Commission. He announced, by way of this press release, that his mandate as Commissioner would have as its main objectives defining the contribution of multilingualism to economic competitiveness, which meant growth and better jobs, lifelong learning and intercultural dialogue as well as what he termed ‘nurturing a space for European political dialogue through multilingual communication with the citizens’. The very same day Orban’s office released another press statement focussing on the significance of linguistic diversity to economic competitiveness.

That particular press release coincided with the publication of findings by the United Kingdom National Centre for Languages [CILT] of a study undertaken for the European Commission during 2006. Commissioned in December 2005, the objective of the study had been to provide the Commission and decision-takers in Member States with practical information and analysis of the use of language skills by small and medium business enterprises and the impact of language skills on business performance. The findings were that each year thousands of European companies lose business contracts because of a lack of language skills in those companies. The

research indicated that business opportunities within the internal market of the European Union would be better able to be exploited if the same companies were to enhance their language skills. The CILT report pointed out that results from the survey of large companies reinforced much of the material gathered from the main survey of small and medium business enterprises. Orban's own conclusion from his reading of the research findings was that 'far from being an unwelcome cost to doing business, investing in language skills can dramatically improve a company's business opportunities'.²¹ He stated that he was determined to position multilingualism at the 'heart of the Lisbon strategy for more growth and jobs'.

In a speech in March of 2007, entitled "Capitalising on European Union enlargement", given at an East capital summit in the Romanian capital of Bucharest, Orban took the opportunity to again emphasise the contribution that multilingualism made to the competitiveness of the European economy. Missed business opportunities had affected a quarter of Romanian companies and one third of companies there had encountered language or culture difficulties. It was for reasons such as these – which were certainly not just a problem for Romania only – that he had decided to establish a Business Forum on multilingualism 'to identify ways of enhancing the multilingual abilities of companies and thus accessing new markets'.²²

In a speech marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, Orban told his audience that the main strength of the European Union was its diversity: 'Crystallised in different forms, from cultural, to linguistic and social diversity, it represents the very core of the European identity, which combines the different pieces of specificity in the well-joined European puzzle.'²³

Therefore, he added, the advent of a separate portfolio for multilingualism was 'relevant' to the need of the European Union to 'preserve and enrich its unity in diversity'.

In April 2007 Commissioner Orban, on his first official visit to Germany, consulted the Bundestag over the shape of the European Union's strategy for multilingualism. He noted that the Commission had decided to adjust the translation and interpretation services in order to cope with the increase to twenty-three in the number of official

languages but at the same time the Commission recognised the need to keep the costs of these services under control. There had been within the Commission, according to Orban, an increase in demand for translation in recent years. This had come about because of the perceived need to communicate European Union policies widely, in addition to what was believed to be a need to strengthen the consultation process ‘underpinning their formulation’²⁴ as well as to consult the national parliaments. Imaginative and creative, yet pragmatic, solutions to the problems of increased demand and increased cost were called for, but Orban was adamant that any response would have to ‘respect’ the equality of languages established at the very outset by Regulation 1 of 1958.

Two speeches in the same month from Orban reiterated the importance of linguistic diversity to the future of the European Union. The first, a speech delivered at a German–French secondary school at the time of his visit to Berlin promoted a challenge that was to become a theme, a *leitmotif*, underlying many of his utterances since. Languages could be viewed by some as an obstacle; yet since they were as much a part of the European landscape as cities, mountains and rivers were, languages should rather be viewed for what they really were, namely ‘our one means of communication’. Languages were, he extolled, ‘the path, the boat, the bridge towards the other’. It was up to people everywhere to turn linguistic diversity – ‘a fact of life’ – to their advantage. Orban acknowledged, as indeed Commissioner Reding had done on occasion during the plenary debates of the fifth term of the European Parliament, that the preservation of linguistic diversity was a sensitive subject in Europe. He praised host Germany, as well as Spain and Italy, for actively promoting linguistic diversity within their own borders. He also maintained that, while there were those who thought that through globalisation English had become some kind of *lingua franca*, there in fact remained a very real need for people to know one, or preferably two, languages in addition to their mother tongue. It was not merely that knowledge of additional languages would result in making it easier to find a job, but that languages opened a door, a door to ‘other cultures, to other peoples, to understanding and being understood’:

‘Knowing languages helps us to better grasp the spirit of other countries that share our European identity, and to build bridges to more distant cultures brought to us by people from other parts of the world. This openness to

dialogue is an essential part of what it means to be a European citizen, and this is why the roots of language run so deep here.’²⁵

Orban then turned again to the topic of a new strategy for multilingualism, which he declared must be adopted by the Commission before the end of 2008.

Speaking the next day during a philology symposium at the Osnabrück University, Orban posed the question whether linguistic diversity could help towards the creation of a European identity. The maintenance of linguistic diversity roused strong feelings, he conceded, especially whenever the subject of “language efficiency” was promoted, let alone when the idea of formally adopting a *lingua franca* was advocated. “Language efficiency” and a *lingua franca* were both seen as being in opposition to cultural heritage, the recognition of which had been confirmed by the recent Berlin Declaration on the fiftieth anniversary of the Rome Treaty and its confirmation of the added value given to the European Union by the ‘lively richness of our languages’.²⁶

Orban traced the link between languages and the modern nation state, a concept developed by Herder and other *Philosophen* (as outlined in Chapter One above), and reaffirmed his view that multilingualism had been from the very beginning of the European Union part of its ‘genetic code’. He promised that the first five-yearly report on diversity of language teaching offered in the European Union would look at the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity and identify best practice in language teaching without in any way derogating from the principle of *subsidiarity*. The learning of other languages was the means by which a multicultural society would become a truly intercultural society, as well as ‘an essential means of allowing the European citizens to fully exert their rights and participate in a democratic European society’. On the matter of English as a likely *lingua franca*, Orban acknowledged the reality of what the academic literature [Refer to Chapter Two above] had described as a dominating trend towards English in various fields such as science, modern music and business. But, like a number of the academic commentators on the topic, Orban saw a new form of the English language – a global English – evolving if this trend were to continue. It was his belief, however, that Europe would never be willing to develop only one culture; in fact, creating a

European identity would only come about by making unity in diversity a reality and linguistic diversity was key to this being achieved.

A Press Release records Commissioner Orban's response to concerns raised by a member of the Baden-Württemberg government that there was a continuing need to ensure appropriate recognition of German when discussing European Union affairs and that it was the 'common understanding' of both the Bundestag and the Bundesrat that German not be missed out at the European level. Orban assured the Baden-Württemberg government that the three procedural translation languages – German, French and English – remained on 'an equal footing'.²⁷ He then returned yet again to his theme of a new strategy for 2008 that would explore the contribution made by multilingualism to economic competitiveness, employment growth and intercultural dialogue. While Orban was confident that the European Union was on the path to encouraging multilingualism, a government minister emphasised that fostering multilingualism would not only preserve European Union identity but would also support the German language.

A further opportunity to celebrate the cultural diversity that makes the European Union unique arose when the Cyrillic alphabet became its third official alphabet, after the Roman and Greek alphabets, with the accession of Bulgaria. Speaking in Sofia on "The Day of Cyrillic Alphabet", Orban hailed linguistic diversity as a 'shared wealth that the European Commission is keen to support'.²⁸ It was Europe's role to preserve and cherish all the different national languages, he said, and once again drew an audience's attention to the wider employment opportunities and the richer cultural life made available to those people who made the effort to learn several languages.

In the middle of the year, on a first visit to Spain to apprise himself of the linguistic situation there, he made presentations on what was termed the "political agenda on multilingualism" and promoted programmes, like *Erasmus* and *Socrates*, which fostered the learning of languages.²⁹ One of his speeches was to a working breakfast offered by the Forum "New Economy", and he used the occasion to share his vision

of a multilingual Europe. Alluding yet again to multilingualism as part of the genetic code of the European Union and to the equality of all official languages, he significantly addressed the issue of other languages that enjoyed “official” status inside a Member State. “Significantly”, because he was speaking in Spain and because the issue had preoccupied a number of the Spanish Members of the European Parliament during the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term [Refer to Chapter Five above]. Orban reminded his listeners that since 2005 any Member State could request the use of these other languages enjoying “official” status in communications with the institutions of the European Union. He maintained that the current arrangements whereby Spanish citizens were able to address themselves to the institutions, and receive a reply from those institutions, in Basque, Catalan/Valencian and Galician were working ‘extremely well’. ³⁰ Linguistic diversity was an ‘asset’, he concluded.

Moreover, not only an asset but also a ‘fundamental element’ of the European Union. That description of linguistic diversity was the theme for a speech in Bucharest at a conference organised by the European Institute of Romania and the European Commission Representation in Romania. Echoing sentiments he had already spoken and written on the subject – as recorded in this Chapter above – and also echoing the sentiments of contributors to the plenary debates of the European Parliament between 2000 and 2003, the Commissioner talked about the economic competitiveness, the employment opportunities, the social cohesion and the more extensive political dialogue, all of which do accrue from multilingualism. However, linguistic diversity was even more than this – it was ‘a fact of life’ and it was good for Europe since languages help to make ‘our community’ the ‘rich mosaic’ it is: ‘Europe is not trying to harmonise, to make everyone and everything the same. Europe is our common home, but one where diversity is celebrated’. ³¹

It is apparent from all the speeches and press releases emanating from Commissioner Orban’s office that there is a belief that a balance must be struck between harnessing all the opportunities linguistic diversity offers and facing up to the challenges posed at the same time by these same opportunities. If the reward of multilingualism is living

in a pluralistic society, where its citizens are able to ‘look at things from different and complementary perspectives’, then a key element in any multilingual policy is having the ‘discipline’ to make progress at the same pace in all the twenty three official languages. This was the theme of an address given in Brussels at the opening to the public of the interactive terminology database of the European institutions.³² Turning to remarks made by media commentators urging the European Union to be able to “speak with one voice”, Orban was adamant that such appeals should not be confused with ‘speaking in one language’. His plans for multilingualism were spelled out a day later to the group of “intellectuals for intercultural dialogue” he had assembled in Brussels to advise him. His long-term aim³³ was to achieve a sense of European identity that would run parallel with, not supplant, self-identity, regional identity and national identity. Promoting the ‘cultural dimension’ of language learning was seen as a means to the building of ‘inclusive societies’. Working to help businesses identify how to build up their ‘language capacities’ was a means for those businesses to enter new markets and for their employees to improve their job satisfaction. And making sure that all citizens can communicate with the institutions in their own language was a means to creating ‘a European space for dialogue’ with all citizens. While accepting that individual Member States are responsible for their own linguistic and cultural diversity, the Commission, and in particular his office, was responsible for encouraging Member States to ‘move forward’ in these vital matters, he asserted.

In his first year as Commissioner, Orban publicly addressed the resentment that was felt in France, but not only in France, towards the increasing role of English as *the* language of communication. He acknowledged that the language spoken by any individual person was an integral part of that person’s identity and that great effort was being made to preserve and promote the place of French in the community of languages. It was not his “job” as Commissioner to favour one language over another, but his message to the audience was that support for multilingualism was effectively support for the French language as it was also support for all the other languages of the European Union.³⁴ Indeed, he would have clearly pleased the French when, less than a month later, at a summer school in the north eastern Italian town of Gorizia, he categorically ruled out the possibility of a *lingua franca* being endorsed: ‘Promoting *lingua franca* is intrinsically against the Commission mandate: promoting linguistic

diversity'. The "authorities" cannot determine that there will be a *lingua franca*, since it is 'the people who decide this' whether the authorities favour it or not: '... a *lingua franca* is born when people find a sense to it.' But, significantly, he added:

'When it comes to the European Union, its task is not to favour or combat the communication languages: its task is, as an institution based on the defence of democracy, protection of the present linguistic environment, to consolidate each citizen's right to communicate and make oneself understood in his or her mother tongue.'³⁵

This is an important speech because it encapsulates all the philosophical foundations underlying the commitment to linguistic diversity in the European Union in the twenty first century as well as the practical courses of action that will be followed to ensure commitment. It really is a summation, and equally an endorsement, of the views that received widespread support in the plenary debates in the European Parliament between 2000 and 2003 on matters pertaining to linguistic diversity.

At Gorizia, Orban reaffirmed that the European Union's foundation was the principle of unity in diversity and that, of course, incorporated linguistic diversity. The enrichment brought about by linguistic diversity had been recognised at its inception and expressed formally in documents as varied as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Berlin Declaration. What was important to understand, maintained Orban, was that "unity in diversity" should never be confused with a "melting pot" in which 'differences are suppressed':

'It is a common home where we celebrate diversity and where our many mother tongues are a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding.'³⁵

He reiterated his determination to construct a strategy for multilingualism, one that was comprehensive with the improvement of language skills at its core. The role of the European Union was to work alongside Member States, not over the top of them, to make citizens multilingual, and a first step would be for society to value people who were proficient in two or three languages. He used again the simile of such people having several pairs of glasses through which to look at reality; such individuals were more creative and innovative – the very qualities needed in a globalised world where the ability to promote dialogue between cultures and individuals was an essential starting point. Citizens were now able to address the

European Commission and access relevant information in any of twenty three languages at a cost of only about two euros per citizen per year. The Union was never intended merely to unite economies but rather to unite people. In short, Orban concluded that multilingualism was at the ‘heart’ of the core values of the European Union: ‘respect for the individual, openness towards other cultures, tolerance and acceptance of others and respect for linguistic diversity’.

Noting that 2008 had been declared the International Year of Languages by the General Assembly of the United Nations, Orban took the opportunity on the European Day of Languages in 2007 to ‘take stock’. Among the issues he said needed to be given thought to was the question as to why English is not enough and why more English means more foreign languages.³⁶ The next day, at a European Dissemination Conference, he was clearly delighted to be able to tell his audience that the public on-line consultation that had been launched to pave the way for the next major policy statement on multilingualism had received 623 contributions in just two weeks, proof Orban said that ‘languages matter to our citizens’.³⁷ That figure had been revised to over one thousand replies in the same period, according to a speech given six days later.³⁸ And the responses just kept coming!³⁹

One of the defining qualities of the Orban approach has been to make sure he is seen to be fully supportive of *all* twenty three official languages. In one sense he walks a tightrope, recognising the reality of the role that English is playing in the labour market yet at the same time constantly reassuring those he speaks to that all twenty three languages are equal. Therefore, it was not surprising that he told a French audience that ‘we are particularly appreciative of the action taken by France in *pleading* for respect of the principle of equality for all the official languages of the Union’. [My emphasis] And the same audience would have been gratified to hear Orban say that one of the main conclusions from a conference he had organised on the subject of languages as a competitive asset for Europe was that ‘in the world of international business it is not enough to have a good grasp of English’.⁴⁰ It was a conclusion, Orban was at pains to point out, that would have delighted, but not surprised, the French! There was more good news announced for the French with the cyber trophy for languages to mark the European Day of Languages 2007 being

awarded to the French Senate for the translation of its internet site into English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Arabic and Chinese.

In his efforts to ‘bring the benefits of languages to our citizens’, Orban has continually stressed the need for the Commission and Member States to work along similar lines, although he is ready to admit that some Member States have been more eager to cooperate than others.⁴¹ He has remained steadfast, however, in taking what he once referred to as ‘a helicopter view’⁴² of what language knowledge means for the European Union, and this includes, *inter alia*, urging Europeans to ask themselves what they are doing to value regional and minority languages in their community.

One of the priorities for the Commissioner has been to address ‘the interface between business and language’. Language strategies were acknowledged as being required not merely as part of marketing and export drives but, increasingly, because companies comprise employees from different national and language backgrounds, for internal communication. And there was clear need to improve the links between business, education and public authorities so that the requirements of business are better understood and reflected in educational goals. It was no longer appropriate for higher education institutions to operate within a vacuum – reform of the relationship between universities and business was long overdue if Europe’s ‘innovation and skills gap – and this includes language skills’ is to be overcome.⁴³

The public utterances of Leonard Orban during 2007, the first year in his role as Commissioner for Multilingualism, whether those utterances took the form of speeches made to a wide variety of audiences in a number of Member States or were in the form of press releases, shared a great deal in common. He sought to emphasise key reasons why acceptance and promotion of linguistic diversity was at the heart of the European Union. All these utterances were in line with the majority view on linguistic diversity as expressed by Members of the European Parliament in the plenary debates between 2000 and 2003. There can be no doubt that the Commission had “taken on board” the sentiments articulated in the Chamber during those years. An examination of Orban’s public utterances in 2008 shows a reiteration of the same “messages”.

Typical of this was a speech delivered in January 2008 to a conference of the Romanian-American University in Bucharest.⁴⁴ The joint themes of accepting linguistic diversity in order to build inclusive societies, to develop better skills and employability and to create a far more competitive Europe were traversed, with the accompanying reminder that a modern information society is built around communication. Orban's bureau had published a report entitled "Promoting languages and linguistic diversity". This report had called on Member States to work on similar lines to the Commission in the promotion of language policies, because societies and regions were increasingly interlinked – that was a real consequence of globalisation – and it was languages that provided the key that could unlock success for Europe in the future.

Not only did languages provide the key, but a new danger was looming, the "languages divide": 'the cleavage between those who speak more languages and can reap the benefits of the European space and globalisation, and those who cannot'.⁴⁵ In multicultural societies, diversity was sometimes seen as a threat, with some communities as a consequence forced to live in isolation. In these circumstances xenophobia arises. The solution, as Orban saw it, is for a multicultural society to evolve into an intercultural society 'where citizens of different backgrounds share a dialogue'. In order to have dialogue, languages are needed. Returning to one of his favourite themes, namely that 'we cannot content ourselves any longer with the comfortable thought that English is enough', the Commissioner asserted that no language should be recommended more than another. It was up to citizens to choose their languages according to their interests, where they live or their family background, and he called on educational authorities everywhere to offer what he termed a 'palette' of languages.

To those parliamentarians who had expressed the minority view in the plenary debates that one common language would help the citizens of the European Union better understand one another, Commissioner Orban would point to history, which has contradicted this notion. Europe had always been multilingual. Even Latin had to 'adapt to the complexities of the peoples of Europe' even though it had been imposed as the *lingua franca* by the Roman Empire, and today 'we still need all our languages to express the multiplicity of our nature'. He was speaking at a book fair in the

Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, but he might just as well have been speaking to the European Union as a whole, when he outlined to his audience the reasons why the Commission had always put languages at the ‘very heart’ of its actions:

‘Undoubtedly, an international language such as English is an important instrument of communication in today's world. But one language alone does not allow us to appreciate and experience Europe's cultural richness, to grow in fellow-feeling as European citizens. People need to know each other's culture, ideas and ways of living to be able to develop a common feeling of citizenship. Learning a language is not just accessing a communication code, but accepting that you can be influenced and changed by a different conception of life. By learning languages, and gaining an insight into the point of view of others, we become more tolerant, more ready to compromise, more conscious of the complexity of our society. We do not belong to just one mother tongue any more, but are nurtured by a variety of cultures. We learn to see our many mother tongues as a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding.’⁴⁶

The message was clear: equal treatment of its languages was inherent in the European Union from its inception. Yet the Commissioner is up front about the controversy that has surfaced from time to time – ‘hotly debated’ in the media and even, he has conceded, on the floor of the European Parliament – concerning the “official languages” of the European Union. It was, he told an audience at Oxford University, not an ‘act of charity’⁴⁷ to smaller countries or to lesser used languages that there were currently twenty three official languages. For the European Union to work as a community, there had to be parity of treatment for each partner, each Member State. And to the question as to why the Commission devotes so much effort encouraging all citizens to learn two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue and does not just ‘leave everyone in peace’, Orban’s response is that this language target was set by the Heads of state and government of all Member States at Barcelona in 2002. In his Oxford speech, Orban yet again praised the contribution to the promotion of linguistic diversity by French writer Amin Maalouf (the chair of his advisory group of intellectuals) whose thesis was that if people are made to feel guilty about their culture of origin, they will likely end up asserting their identity aggressively. Maalouf’s view was that this aggression might take the form of religious extremism, so, for this reason, multilingualism provides an antidote to fanaticism.

The argument presented in one Orban speech is not unexpectedly very similar to that contained in another. So, for example, the thrust of his speech in Oxford was echoed closely in what he said a few days later to Polish students at a debate at Warsaw University.⁴⁸ Warsaw was also the venue – on this occasion the College of Europe’s Natolin campus – for him to emphasise how linguistic diversity strengthened democracy, and he dismissed out of hand the notion that too much time and money was spent translating and interpreting into all the official languages of the Union. He stressed that if the Union’s institutions were to have legitimacy, then citizens must be able to read and understand proposed laws in their own language and have their say on the matters proposed. Furthermore, it was equally important to provide ‘a level playing field for decision makers to discuss policies that they agree at European level, allowing everyone to speak, get advice and make judgment calls in their own languages’.⁴⁹

At the end of March 2008, Commissioner Orban addressed the Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament, an ‘invaluable’ opportunity to receive input and reactions from those on the committee to what the Commission was doing with regard to linguistic diversity. The responses to the online consultation, ten per cent of which were from people with a regional or minority language as their first language, demonstrated that the Commission was on the “right track”:

‘The overall goal is still to promote linguistic diversity as the most obvious expression of the Union's motto unity in diversity. The strong link between language, culture and identity is at the source of this desire.’⁵⁰

As has been illustrated already in this Chapter, Commissioner Orban is always pleased when it is appropriate to laud an individual Member State’s commitment to linguistic diversity and hold this commitment up as a model for others to imitate. On a visit to the Netherlands, he described that country as a linguistic ‘beacon’ other countries could aspire to be. His reasons for the claim were that survey results show that ninety-one per cent of Dutch citizens are able to hold a conversation in a second language, seventy five per cent in a third language and thirty three per cent in a fourth language. Moreover, the Netherlands was preserving the regional language of the people of Friesland province, Frysk (Frisian). The Dutch, Orban said, were giving everyone ‘great hope that we can reach our goal of developing a truly language-

friendly Europe'.⁵¹ He also saw great hope for the future of the Dutch language, especially because of the ongoing cooperation with Belgium and the work of the Taalunie⁵². At the same time, while acknowledging that many of the universities in the Netherlands were able to attract foreign students by providing tuition in English, he urged that exposing these students to the Dutch language be 'an integral part of their educational experience'.

A public hearing in Brussels in the middle of April 2008 was hailed as 'a milestone in the consultation process' on linguistic diversity. It was the first opportunity since a separate Multilingualism portfolio had been established in the Commission for citizens and the Commission to openly debate the European Union's language policy together. Orban stressed that the time was 'ripe' for a new strategy on multilingualism, although he reaffirmed that the close links between language, culture and identity were the basis for the intention to promote linguistic diversity as the 'clearest expression' of the European Union motto of "unity in diversity". His own personal intention was to be the 'catalyst' of such a policy, he declared.⁵³ One stated aim was that special attention would be paid to schools, for these were 'particularly favourable environments' to foster linguistic diversity, as he made clear when congratulating his colleagues at the Commission Representation in Italy on the occasion of the presentation of the "Europa alla lavagna" and "Viaggio in Europa" awards.⁵⁴

A European network to promote linguistic diversity was launched in mid June 2008, one of the three language networks that had been selected for funding through the recently established Lifelong Learning Programme. What was especially significant about this particular recipient of funding was that it was dedicated to the less widely used languages of Europe and, therefore, the Linguistic Diversity Network had the 'potential to become a powerful instrument for promoting these languages'. When this network shares good practices, the smaller language communities will be able to 'learn from the expertise of the most advanced language planning boards'. The net result of this will be a 'new impetus' to linguistic diversity in the European Union.⁵⁵

A ministerial conference held in Brussels in February 2008 had been the first such conference with delegations from all twenty seven Member States, as well as from

Norway and Iceland, to examine language issues in Europe and it resolved to make linguistic diversity an even more effective tool for dialogue and social inclusion. Now, just four months later in June, at the initiative of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council and the Norwegian Government, the second such conference was held, confirming for Orban that all governments are convinced that linguistic diversity is an increasingly important issue leading to the creation of stable societies.⁵⁶

Despite all of the positive initiatives in the promotion of linguistic diversity, languages remain a sensitive issue for some and the Commission is aware of this reality. However, Commissioner Orban's visits to different Member States have strengthened his belief that languages are best seen as a 'source of mutual enrichment' and are able to be a tool for inclusion rather than a 'barrier for excluding others'. He relayed this message while in Riga⁵⁷ where he was promoting the translation and interpretation sectors of his portfolio because, at the time, there were only thirteen Latvian interpreters employed at the European Commission and because these Latvian interpreters are expected to have a second active language, which is putting pressure on trainers and trainees alike.

The much heralded Commission Communication on "Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment" was finally unveiled to the public in mid-September 2008. The purpose behind the Communication was to raise awareness that 'our linguistic diversity is a precious asset, which we should treasure', with the "mainstreaming" of multilingualism across European Union policies. The main points of the proposal had all been signalled well ahead of this announcement in various speeches – referred to in detail above – that Commissioner Orban had delivered to a wide variety of different audiences. There were "no surprises" in this policy announcement!

Among the main points listed were: every citizen should have an opportunity to learn the languages they need or choose to participate fully in society because multilingualism is the key to intercultural dialogue; better language skills can help individuals get better jobs; all citizens should have the opportunity to communicate appropriately in order to realise their potential and make the most of the opportunities offered by a modern and innovative European Union; everybody should have access

to appropriate language training or to other means of facilitating communication so that there is no undue linguistic obstacle to living, working or communicating in the European Union. For the first time the strategy would address the external dimension of multilingualism with the goal of realising the potential of European Union languages in third countries by promoting the teaching and learning of European languages abroad. Conversely, non-European Union languages would be promoted in the Union.⁵⁸

The following month the Communication on Multilingualism was presented to the European Parliament's Committee on Culture.⁵⁹ In giving the presentation, Commissioner Orban was quick to draw attention to the fact that the strategy was not intended to deal with the problems of language *within* the European institutions. Rather, Orban said, the strategy addressed multilingualism in a broader and more diverse sense. One of the priorities in the strategy was to make all citizens in the Union aware of the benefits to be had from intercultural dialogue, linguistic diversity and the study of languages. The Commissioner expressed his confidence that the European Parliament would fully support all the initiatives contained in the strategy. As he told those gathered at a literary function just a few days later in Copenhagen: 'En effet, l'un des fondements de notre citoyenneté européenne consiste en la coexistence de langues différentes qui se rencontrent et s'enrichissent'.⁶⁰

A conference at the University of Exeter afforded Leonard Orban the opportunity to air some of his concerns to a British audience.⁶¹ He began by recounting his visit to Wales where he had witnessed the pride with which people speak Welsh even though they could just as well have communicated in English. It was, he said, proof that Welsh language and Welsh identity were indistinguishable. What he believed he had witnessed in Wales was testimony to the fact that a language 'can come back from the brink to become a vibrant living language'. Orban then turned his attention to reports of a considerable decline in the number of students learning foreign languages in British schools. Despite these reports, he was encouraged by a government measure whereby from 2010 children from the age of seven would be learning a foreign language as part of the primary school curriculum in England. Indeed, he declared the measure 'very important', adding that the real challenge is to 'encourage' language learning in every stage of education and suggested that universities such as the one he

was speaking at might like to encourage all students to take a language option as a subsidiary subject.

For a quite different scenario on linguistic diversity, one need only look at what was happening in Malta. Speaking in Valetta late in 2008, Orban declared Malta's accession in 2004 as a huge success linguistically. Ninety two per cent of Maltese people surveyed said they could hold a conversation in a foreign language and more than two thirds were able to speak in two foreign languages, with about a quarter even able to converse in three foreign languages. The language learning policies and facilities of Malta impressed the Commissioner, and these would provide exemplars for other Member States as the Commission was looking 'to bring about exchanges of ideas and practice' among Member States. Other countries could learn from the Maltese how gaining skills in other languages did not automatically mean a loss of skill in the use of one's own mother tongue. The fact that the Maltese language was thriving alongside the use of English and Italian was itself a powerful message to other countries that were experiencing a growing dependency on more dominant languages. As Orban put it, the Maltese have demonstrated beyond doubt that 'David can co-exist with Goliath'.⁶²

Fittingly, the Commissioner's last major speech in 2008 portrayed the role played by linguistic diversity and multilingualism in the European Union in the context of that Union's existence over fifty years. Putting languages 'on an equal footing' at the start was not just 'empty' symbolism but rather a 'tangible sign' that old enemies were committed to meaningful dialogue. As the number of Member States increased and as the number of official languages increased, the commitment to respect linguistic diversity did not diminish. On the contrary, the stage has been reached whereby linguistic diversity, far from being considered impractical, is today viewed as 'an imperative'. But as the "curtain comes down" on fifty years, the thrust of language policy must move from merely respecting different languages to actually learning and speaking other languages, if only because the speakers of different languages have never before lived so close together. One attendant consequence is that multilingualism is now recognised as 'a policy area in its own right' for learning languages enables participation in the life of the community, can help to dispel prejudices and make people more tolerant and understanding. These are the attitudes

required for building a ‘strong and sustainable society’.⁶³ And these advantages accruing from linguistic diversity in action are over and above the advantages of increased employment opportunities and economic prosperity in a more globalised market place. Orban concludes that the newly articulated strategy for multilingualism has met with approbation from all levels – the Commission has recognised that multilingualism must be mainstreamed across a range of policy areas while Member States and various stakeholders in business and civil society have endorsed the strategy. What remains for the future is to turn this approval and enthusiasm evident at all these levels, as well as from the public at large, into action. Commissioner Orban is convinced that there is no option but to move forward, taking the pathway outlined in the strategy.

Emerging from all the speeches delivered and press releases issued by the Commissioners Figel’ and Orban, referred to above, are several overriding and recurring themes.

Firstly, languages are an essential component of an individual person’s identity and also an essential element in shaping the identity of Member States. The first regulation adopted by the European Economic Community (as it then was known) placed all the official languages of Member States on the same ranking as official languages of that Community. The European Union has not deviated from this principle since. With twenty three official languages and twenty seven Member States in 2008, it really is a case of “unity in diversity” in practice. And one language must not be favoured over another. Regional and minority languages are also an important part of Europe’s linguistic and cultural diversity and wealth. These particular languages contribute to ensuring that Europe is not reduced to a ‘melting pot’ that reduces difference, but rather a place where diversity is celebrated as an asset. As a consequence, languages become the bridges between the peoples of Europe.

Secondly, linguistic diversity is a core European Union value. It is the value which incorporates respect for the individual, tolerance for other people, and openness towards different cultures. Linguistic diversity is a means to greater social cohesion.

Thirdly, languages are very important because they open doors. They open doors to new horizons and professional development for individual citizens and they open doors to economic development for businesses and for Member States. Taking pride in Europe's cultural diversity is a way of confronting the challenges posed by globalisation. Linguistic diversity contributes to prosperity.

Fourthly, multilingualism can not be regarded any more as an optional extravagance for the European Union. English is not enough. English alone does not provide the competitive edge that Europe needs. The idea of English as a European *lingua franca* sufficient for present and future needs is an idea that is contradicted by the very history of Europe. This is so because Europe has always been multilingual, even during the days of the Roman Empire. Furthermore, multilingualism is what keeps the door open between the institutions of the European Union and its citizens. Linguistic diversity contributes to democracy and to citizenship.

In short, languages are, and must be seen as, bridges, not barriers; benefits not burdens; opportunities, not obstacles.

Now, compare these dominant themes enunciated by the Commission with the themes that emerge from a study of the plenary debates of the European Parliament's fifth term 2000 – 2003. These themes included recognition that linguistic diversity should remain the very essence of European Union "culture" and that encouragement given to language learning was integral to respecting others' cultures and would lead to better communication, along with the eradication of xenophobia, racism, and intolerance. Each Member State's right to retain its own culture, identity and language was defended. Acquisition of additional languages would result in easier access for European Union citizens to the labour and goods markets and so facilitate economic growth and prosperity. There was support frequently expressed in the debates for regional and minority indigenous languages. All these matters raised in those plenary debates by Members have been accepted by the Commission as being of significant concern and the Commission has endeavoured to implement programmes and strategies to address those points at issue. The words of Members were not ignored.

Even raising, in the plenary debates, the contentious matter of a perceived reluctance by the Commission or the Council to act decisively on behalf of an indigenous or minority language within an existing Member State when that language was not receiving the treatment a Member believed it was rightly entitled to has borne fruit. Commissioner Orban does not bludgeon an alleged offending Member State. Instead, he has used the approach of what might be termed “moral suasion”; he has openly praised countries that have made linguistic diversity one of their priorities – such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Malta – and points to them as role models for other Member States to emulate. He has also made a point of encouraging Spain, against whose governments most of the adverse comments were directed in the European Parliament, along the path of linguistic diversity. When he mentions national languages, Orban always talks parity of national languages and he always mentions minority languages. He gently chides a country where he thinks there is a shortfall in linguistic diversity, as in the case of the United Kingdom. He is content to very mildly shame such countries into action; certainly not to reprimand, let alone to condemn, humiliate or isolate them.

It may turn out to be the wisest approach of all.

Is fluency in several languages and the desire to “cover as many bases as possible” in so far as the national languages are concerned the prime criteria for appointment to the Orban cabinet?

Members of the cabinet of the Commissioner for Multilingualism are actually not permanent staff but are appointed both from inside and from outside the institutions of the European Union for the duration of the Commissioner’s mandate, a mandate that will expire in mid-2009. The overall rules for appointment to the Commissioner Orban’s cabinet are the same rules as apply for any other cabinet in the European Commission. These rules make provision for a maximum of half of the staff members to be of the same nationality as the particular Commissioner. The rules mean that a

variety of nationalities and languages are represented in any cabinet. Commissioner Orban, while accepting the importance of language knowledge, is mindful that cabinets need to build a capacity for an understanding of all areas of responsibility beyond their own portfolio since the Commission makes its decisions collegially. Arabela Iris Ster, Assistant in Commissioner Orban's cabinet, puts it this way: 'both language knowledge, a fair representation of as many Member States as possible given the clearly restricted number of staff members but first and foremost their background and experience are the criteria for a cabinet composition'.⁶⁴

REFLECTIONS

'The prime instrument of a people's genius is its language' – Stendhal (Henri Beyle)

Are linguistic diversity issues merely an elitist agenda?

At the start of Chapter One of this thesis, reference was made to events "on the ground" in several Member States of the European Union in 2008 that had regard to issues of language and linguistic diversity. Have these types of events been comparatively rare? Have they been largely unremarkable? Should any such events be considered merely isolated incidents and, consequently, were the debates that took place during the fifth term of the European Parliament part of an elitist agenda on behalf of those who contributed speeches or submitted written declarations? Or were the debates about "real", everyday matters of significance to citizens of the European Union since the end of that fifth term?

The events at Dunajská Streda/Dunaszerdahely referred to in Chapter One did not really come "out of the blue". In August 2006, a major dispute between Hungary and Slovakia occurred after reports⁶⁵ that a young ethnic Hungarian woman was beaten up in the Slovak town of Nitra allegedly because she was overheard speaking in

Hungarian on her mobile phone. A day later another ethnic Hungarian was attacked in Sládkovičovo, again allegedly for speaking Hungarian. The SMK, the political party of Slovakia's ethnic Hungarians, claimed that gangs of young Slovaks were entering bars and intimidating Hungarian speakers. These incidents were labelled "atrocities", fuelled by Slovak xenophobia, by the Hungarian Prime Minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány, who took part in a televised debate with his Slovak counterpart. The latter, Robert Fico, did not immediately condemn the attacks but rather only promised to take some action. The Slovak Government of the day comprised members of the Slovak National Party (SNS) whose leader Ján Slota at one time referred to Hungarians as a "cancer" who should have been expelled from Slovakia at the end of World War II.

In Belgium itself, seat of the European Commission, disputes between French-speaking Walloons and the Dutch-speaking Flemish population over the linguistic balance in various communities can have political ramifications for the whole country. For example, in May 2005 the Belgian Government eventually won a vote of confidence in parliament but only after months of deadlocked negotiations about language rights in an electoral district of Brussels and an agreement to postpone a "decision" for a further two years. The dispute was described ⁶⁶ as 'complicated' because it revolved around how 'should an electoral district which includes suburban Flanders and parts of Brussels be split up between the country's Flemish and French-speaking political parties'. According to reports, many French speakers had been moving into the Dutch-speaking suburbs and the Flemish parties were not prepared to yield political control. In the following year, the mayor of Merchtem – located fifteen kilometres north-west of Brussels – publicly defended ⁶⁷ a ban imposed on the speaking of French in his town's schools, a ban that would mean parents and children would be allowed to speak only Dutch within the boundaries of the schools. More and more non-Dutch speaking families had settled in Merchtem in recent years because it was so close to Brussels and the Flemish Interior Minister had not long before overturned a ban on signs not in Dutch in the town's markets. Are Belgium's linguistic rivalries really about language or are they more about maintaining a political power base? Are they manifestations of resentment on the part of the Flemish to French having been for so many years in the past the language of Belgian royalty, nobility, the military and the middle class? A more light-hearted approach, but one with a serious message, occurred in 2007 when students ridiculed these rivalries,

rivalries that had resulted in a delay of more than three months in the formation of a government, by staging a giant pillow fight in Brussels in which they exchanged “blows”.⁶⁸ However, later that same year, with still no government in place, there were tears, not laughter, when an Antwerp audience booed the French-speaking Miss Belgium after she admitted she could not speak Dutch.⁶⁹

In France itself, linguistic patriotism is evident not only in the academic literature. In a very high profile incident⁷⁰ at a European Union Council meeting, President Jacques Chirac and his foreign and finance ministers, Philippe Douste-Blazy and Thierry Breton, walked out when Frenchman Ernest-Antoine Seillière, the head of the employers’ association UNICE, a business lobby group, decided to change from French to English in the middle of a speech he was delivering. Seillière defended his decision to President Chirac’s face, reportedly saying that English was the working language of that particular session and the accepted business language of Europe. For a ‘profoundly shocked’ Chirac, however, there was much more at stake: “It is not just national interest, it is in the interest of culture and the dialogue of cultures. You cannot build the world of the future on just one language and, hence one culture.” He was determined to make the point that France had great respect for its language, and had been ‘fighting for a long time’ to establish the presence of the French language whether that be in the European Union, the United Nations or the Olympic Games.

Chirac’s barbs were aimed squarely at English and the United Kingdom, a nation of language “barbarians” according to a former chief inspector of English schools.⁷¹ Director of the Association for Language Learning, Linda Parker,⁷² blamed the lack of awareness of other languages by British people on the fact that they lived on an island and ‘we don’t live in a language-learning culture and we rely on other people learning our language rather than making the effort ourselves’. At least in the city of Reading, one newspaper⁷³ editor decided to print five thousand copies in Polish as a “bridge building” exercise to ‘reach out’ in the interests of community cohesion to the large number of Poles living in that city. The editor’s response to people who would argue that immigrants in the city should be able to speak English was: ‘Well, yes, they should – but that’s not going to happen overnight’, it was reported. Further north, in Scotland, in 2007 researchers at the University of Glasgow completed an archive of more than four million words in Scots and Scottish English and made it available on

an online website. According to one project researcher, the Scots language was ‘one aspect of a long and flourishing cultural heritage’ as the language was a source of interest internationally.⁷⁴

Laws enacted in Ireland to promote the use of the Irish language came into force in 2005 whereby the English-language version of the names of about two thousand towns, villages and crossroads in the Gaeltacht – the western parts of Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kerry and Mayo counties where Gaelic had been traditionally spoken as well as areas of Meath and Waterford counties – would no longer have legal status.⁷⁵ Another law taking effect at the same time introduced official Gaelic versions and spellings of many hundreds of place names outside the Gaeltacht that had to be displayed alongside their English equivalents. Yet some eighteen months later, after growing controversy in An Daingean, a public referendum initiated by the Kerry County Council voted five to one to change that town’s name to the bilingual Dingle-Daingean ui Chuis. The local population had clearly feared that its worldwide recognition was going to be irretrievably lost.⁷⁶ The Irish Government responded that there was no precedent for a town to have a bilingual name so a media report concluded that despite the referendum result ‘the debate over how to refer to An Daingean/Dingle/Daingean ui Chuis/that beautiful place by the sea, looks unlikely to die down any time soon’.

A quite different type of linguistic dispute, one initiated by a Member State against the European Union itself, occurred at the start of 2006 when the Latvian Government insisted on the name *eiro* for the single currency. The Union’s policy was for the currency to be spelt the same way by all Member States (Greece, with a different alphabet, being the obvious exception). Despite this, the Latvian Minister of Education, Ina Druviete, reportedly asserted⁷⁷ that her government’s decision was not a caprice but rather a ‘very important issue which threatens the fundamental values of the [European Union], such as equality and identity’. Promising ‘never to give up’ over the issue, she said her government was willing to defend itself before the European Court of Justice. The Latvian language commission was fully in support of the government claiming that *eiro* is part of the Latvian word for Europe, *Eiropa*, so its claims for linguistic independence were ‘justified’. Was this dispute really an assertion of national pride and a confirmation of linguistic identity after the end of

Soviet occupation and the changes forced on the country's language laws by accession to the European Union? In neighbouring Lithuania, meanwhile, a pilot scheme to teach people foreign languages while they travel by trolleybus was being finalised. Funded by the European Commission, the scheme would provide "language buses" on certain routes in Vilnius, which would teach passengers English and Polish while they were onboard.⁷⁸ Travellers were even to be encouraged to hand their completed worksheets in to be marked with the incentive of a course of free language lessons for the best. It was a scheme to be extended to buses, trams and trains throughout the European Union by the end of 2006. Lithuania itself had been the home to more than a quarter of a million Jews speaking Yiddish – the language that was common to Jews in eastern Europe – as their mother tongue before Nazi and then Soviet repression reduced the Jewish population to fewer than five thousand of whom only about one tenth were users of the language. In 2007, a nursery school was established in Vilnius to preserve use of Yiddish before the language died.⁷⁹

The events recorded above are certainly not intended to serve as an exhaustive list. Rather they are intended to provide a flavour, to illustrate what has occurred in the European Union in the period from the conclusion of the fifth parliamentary term to the end of 2008. They support the view that issues of linguistic diversity are essentially issues about human beings and their aspirations for identity, and not merely an elitist agenda.

Do the debates contain lessons for those on very distant shores?

New Zealand is as far across the world from Europe as it is possible to go. So could there really be any lessons at all in the content of the plenary debates of the fifth European Parliament on the subject of linguistic diversity, especially the debates centring on minority indigenous languages, for New Zealand? Especially so, since it has been written just over ten years ago: 'New Zealand is an almost exclusively English-speaking country, yet has another language, Māori, as the only official language so designated by statute'.⁸⁰ And, especially so since it had been written only

a few years previously: ‘New Zealand must be one of the few countries in the world where the phrase “Language is the key to understanding” is meaningless and uncomprehended and where linguistic ignorance and arrogance are rife, thriving and rampant’.⁸¹

Are there any parallels between the linguistic history of Europe and that of New Zealand in the latter’s recent history – during the last one hundred and seventy years – that make what was said and written in the plenary debates of the European Parliament 2000 – 2003 at all relevant to New Zealand in the twenty first century? It would seem so.

Do the issues emerging from the plenary debates in the European Parliament help inform New Zealanders regarding linguistic diversity issues in their own country? It would seem so.

Towards the close of 2008, one particular letter appeared in the Christchurch daily newspaper, *The Press*. That letter lamented:

‘On the day we learn our [New Zealand] children are ranked way below Kazakhstan for attainment in science, Labour’s [the Opposition Party in the New Zealand Parliament] Grant Robertson, in his maiden speech to Parliament, tells us every Kiwi child should learn Māori until aged 14. Interesting Opposition priorities.’⁸²

It was in 2005 that the New Zealand Ministry of Education determined eight “values” which were to be taught in schools, underpinning all learning. Included among the values listed were: integrity; respect and care; excellence; environmental sustainability; inquiry and curiosity; community; and equity. However, the value listed first was labelled “diversity” and was defined as the unique cultures and heritage of Aotearoa/New Zealand, and other cultures’ importance in New Zealand society.⁸³ Statistics New Zealand forecasts that by 2021 about seventeen per cent of the population (or 760,000) will identify themselves as Māori; the Māori population having grown by twenty-nine per cent from 2005. Significantly, in 2021 half the Māori population will be under twenty-six years of age.⁸⁴

The rationale for what the newly elected Member, Grant Robertson, referred to above, had advocated in Parliament for the compulsory teaching of the Māori language is actually contained in these words he used in the debating chamber: “This is one small step we could take to build a more harmonious society.”⁸⁵ And in that regard he was saying nothing different from what many Members of the European Parliament had said in the plenary debates about the role linguistic diversity and multilingualism could play in social cohesion. As stated in Chapter Three above, even a fleeting reading of the plenary debates of the fifth parliamentary term reveals considerable support among MEPs for the viewpoint that respect for the cultures of others leads inevitably to a diminution of xenophobia, racism and intolerance.

Yet the issue of what constitutes identity among New Zealanders is a controversial issue for some and undoubtedly has repercussions for linguistic diversity in the country. This question of identity and the confusion between nationality and ethnicity come to the fore especially as each three-yearly general election cycle draws near.⁶ There has, according to the general manager of Statistics New Zealand,⁸⁷ been a growing trend for people to respond to the five-yearly population census question on “ethnicity” by answering “New Zealander” or “Kiwi”. It was these same censuses, according to at least one educationalist writing within the last five years, which painted a depressing linguistic picture of the country.⁸⁸ According to the general manager of Statistics New Zealand, “ethnicity” is loosely defined as a group of people who share common factors such as race, ancestry, culture and religion, and is not seen as the same thing as nationality, but the concept of ethnicity is ‘blurry and it’s something we have to do a whole lot more work on’. Therefore, it was deemed that, in 2006, those who responded as “New Zealander” or “Kiwi” would be categorised as “Other” instead of as “European”! ‘Society is constantly changing and people’s perception of [ethnicity] changes with more integration ... [New Zealander] is a distinct group of its own with common characteristics. People’s thinking about ethnicity evolves’, the general manager is reported to have said. However, according to John Roughan,⁸⁹ “nationhood” is every person’s strongest identity and the comfortable answer to the internal question “What am I?” for the majority of people living in New Zealand ‘is an automatic and unequivocal: “I am a New Zealander”.’

But for the academic Margaret Mutu⁹⁰ there is no doubt about identity as it relates to Māori: 'For Māori, the correct answer to the question "Who are you?" for any individual lies in the formulaic sayings of each of his or her own extended family and tribal groupings whose ancestral lands and waterways are located throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand'. It is argued that the position of Māori people in New Zealand is unique because they are the indigenous race who migrated to these shores from somewhere so long ago that memory of that original homeland does not exist. Roughan has described their uniqueness but also exposed their dilemma in this way: 'They have developed here in a distinctive way and there is nowhere else in the world where they are sovereign and their culture secure. Indigenous people need to establish their nationhood in states where they live as a minority. They might be more easily accommodated in countries where they predominate in some part of its territory, which Māori do not in any region of New Zealand'.⁹¹

The ownership of those 'ancestral lands and waterways' referred to by Mutu was supposed to be protected by the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi signed by the British Crown and certain tribes as well as independent chiefs. Moreover, according to Joe Williams, the Treaty provided the 'building blocks' with which the Tribes who were signatories⁹² to the Treaty could ensure the protection and survival of not only their economic, social and political bases, but also their cultural base, in other words their language, culture and history.⁹³

In the early 1830s, Māori was one language made up of a number of mutually intelligible dialects and was the language of communication and trade in the very north of the country where the few non-Māori settlers were resident. It was generally referred to as the New Zealand language and was closely related to other eastern Polynesian languages.⁹⁴ The customs and culture at that time were likewise Māori. Mutu observes: 'While some English immigrants, particularly traders, married into local *hapū* and assimilated themselves into Māori society, others, particularly the missionaries, remained somewhat apart. The missionaries' sole purpose for being in the country was to impose their English religious beliefs on as many Māori as they could. In order to achieve that to their satisfaction they also needed to impose English culture and values on Māori'.⁹⁵ Of missionary education activity in general, and of the Māori language in particular, Bruce Biggs writes:

‘The first Mission Schools attracted few pupils, but in the 1830s the Māori began to display real enthusiasm for learning to read and write, and those who had learned to do so at the schools in the north ‘spread the knowledge from village to village throughout the whole island’. The Mission Schools did all their teaching in the Māori language. This policy was questioned as early as 1832, and criticism continued, but evidence of the policy’s success is given by the enthusiasm with which the people set about becoming literate in their own language... It seems possible, indeed likely, that by the middle of the nineteenth century a higher proportion of the Māori than of the settlers were literate in their own language’. ⁹⁶

However, all that changed abruptly in 1858 when, in order to receive government funding, the mission schools had to make English the language of the classroom. Teaching in English became compulsory in the state-controlled “Native” primary schools which were established by legislation in 1867 and, while some bilingual education was permitted after 1879 (when the Department of Education took over the running of these schools), by 1900 the Māori language was not meant to be used either in the classroom or in the playground. An argument might be made that education had effectively become a tool of the dominant class to reproduce the system. Whether that is the case or not, what was taking place was the forced assimilation of Māori. The decision to make English the sole medium of instruction in schools destined that Māori would be consigned to become the language merely of home life in rural areas and suited, as Biggs puts it, ‘to the ceremonial side of Māori life and to its system of values’. ⁹⁷ The ensuing results, according to Biggs, of ‘deliberate neglect’ of the Māori language,

‘amounting in some respects to actual suppression of the Māori language by the education authorities in New Zealand meant that, willy nilly, every Māori had to learn some English during this period. Now everyone can speak English, while many Māori cannot speak Māori. The campaign to eradicate the Māori language, though long, was clearly being won, but as sometimes happens with the weakening of the enemy, the winner’s attitude towards him becomes magnanimous. A change in the attitude of the educators, coupled with increased interest on the part of many Māori in the language slipping from their grasp, has resulted in Māori language being allowed to play a minor part in the educational system of the country’. ⁹⁸

That was his assessment of the situation forty years ago. Bernard Spolsky has described the state the Māori language found itself in by the 1960s as being ‘on the way to the lowest stage on Fishman’s “Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale” ’ ⁹⁹ although Spolsky did add that the situation was to improve twenty years later.

Two other academic commentators, Elizabeth Gordon and Tony Deverson, have been equally forthright about the consequences not only for the survival of the Māori language but also for ‘European New Zealanders’ attitudes’ towards the Māori language:

‘In the colonial era of the 19th and early 20th centuries, English became the dominant language in this country, and the indigenous language of Aotearoa declined along with the numbers and fortunes of its speakers. The attitude of many European New Zealanders has undoubtedly been to regard Māori as an inferior language whose exact pronunciation need not concern them. As a result distorted, ‘near enough’ pronunciations of Māori words took a firm hold in New Zealand English, and are now very difficult to shake off’.¹⁰⁰

A major effect of excluding the Māori language from the education system, an exclusion which it must be acknowledged was, over time, endorsed by some prominent Māori leaders such as Apirana Ngata, was that the language was largely rendered incapable of expressing modern social concepts and contemporary technological developments.¹⁰¹ Indeed, unless there was to be a radical change in the attitude of the government authorities, there was a very real danger that Māori – the only autochthonous language, albeit a minority one, in New Zealand – might be destined to become a *patois*, spoken only in peripheral rural areas that were far away from the centres of economic growth, centres which could provide access to an increased standard of living. At best, a diglossic situation would have emerged whereby Māori was reserved for matters of home life and in traditional cultural ceremonies while English was to be used for every other occasion. Perhaps those Māori who had not protested against the removal of the language from mainstream education believed that inevitably English was the only pathway to “success” in this life. What occurred in New Zealand parallels, in large measure, what occurred in some of the peripheral regions of what is now the European Union, which was, of course, one of the catalysts for the *Euromosaic* Report presented in 1996. Judging from the *verbali* of the plenary debates 2000 – 2003, there was considerable support for the view that greater emphasis should be placed on the lesser used languages of the European Union on the basis that language was accepted as being integral to one’s cultural identity and so fostering their use was, in effect, fostering social cohesion.¹⁰²

Whereas the judicial system had decided that a Māori speaker had to prove a lack of proficiency in the English language before having documents translated into Māori or

before being given access to interpreters in cases before the courts, status as an official language of New Zealand was given to Māori by the Māori Language Act 1987.¹⁰³ While in the European Parliament the ‘model of European civilisation’ was said to be one that allowed for the retention of different languages,¹⁰⁴ W K Hastings says that the Māori Language Act is important because it amounts to legislative recognition that the Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed the right to use the Māori language.¹⁰⁵ One of the “benefits” which followed on from the granting of “official” status as a matter of course was the right for any Māori speaker to use the language in the country’s courts. Well, that is the theory, but there are some provisos which mean that such a right does not exist automatically all the time on any occasion in every court. Interestingly, the English language is still not classified as an “official” language of New Zealand by legislation – its status is said to arise out of custom.¹⁰⁶

There were significant decisions made since 1987 by the Court of Appeal (until 2004, the highest court in the New Zealand judicial hierarchy aside from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London)¹⁰⁷ which clearly set out the obligations which the Crown (Government) has to maintain the Māori language by way of radio and television. As a result, there are currently not only flourishing *iwi* radio stations around the country but also a Māori television channel whose programmes have wide-ranging appeal, with many young presenters and producers involved. The success of Māori Television has come despite, or, perhaps, in spite of, the adverse mainstream media criticism bestowed on the fledgling channel when some inevitable administrative and personnel difficulties emerged in the days before the first on-air transmission.

There has been much unfavourable comment that New Zealand does not have a comprehensive languages policy.¹⁰⁸ More than fifteen years ago, the government of the day decided to commission a report on the priorities for the development of a national languages policy. This report, known as *Aotearoa*, was presented in 1992 and ranked the revitalisation of the Māori language as the highest of its six priorities. The list of priorities in *Aotearoa* was an ordered one because a ranking was considered necessary at the time so that the appropriate decisions could be made about the distribution of the limited resources to be made available to particular language areas. Richard Benton¹⁰⁹ writes: ‘That the ordering might be contested vigorously was clear

from the introduction to the [authorised final version of the] report by the Minister of Education, in which the [original] list was rearranged and restated thus:

- . the opportunities for all children and adults to learn English;
- . the growing need for New Zealanders with skills in major international languages to enhance our competitiveness;
- . the place of Māori as an official language of New Zealand;
- . the need for increasing levels of adult literacy in the workplace;
- . the possibilities for ethnic communities to maintain their own languages;
- . the provision of access to social services for all New Zealanders, including those with communication difficulties’.

In other words, the revitalisation of Māori had been shifted down the list from first place to third place by the Minister of Education.

The first bilingual – English and Māori – school to be given official approval since the establishment of state education for Māori in 1867 was given such approval in 1976. This was a school on the *kohanga reo* model. Margaret Mutu has expressed the benefits which she sees as flowing from the existence of this model:

‘Here, in *kohanga reo*, Maori children flourish amongst their own and are proud to be Māori ... The key principle driving *kohanga reo* and *kura kaupapa Māori* was and is that they are organized and run according to Māori values and conventions. The major benefits to come from this included validating *hapū* and *iwi* knowledge bases, and particularly their history and traditions. This ensured that the children were very clear about their own identity as Māori. It also ensured that control of the knowledge being passed on to the children remained in the hands of their own *whānau* and *hapū*.’¹¹⁰

Of the *kohanga reo*, Wira Gardiner has written: ‘The underpinning philosophy was that young Māori would gain confidence and be better prepared for the challenges of broader society if they could learn to speak their own language – the key to their cultural identity.’¹¹¹ The formation and official acceptance of *kohanga reo* and *kura kaupapa Māori* might well have eased the likelihood of the sort of major political language conflict that has been described by Peter Hans Nelde. He asserted that most current language conflicts are the result of what he termed ‘language separation’, which went hand in hand with different social status accorded the two languages

concerned and the government extending preferential treatment to the dominant language. The ‘scares and frustrations’ – whether these be religious, social, economic or psychological scares and frustrations – of the ‘weaker group’ are what may be responsible for the language conflict. Nelde writes that the climax to the political language conflict is reached when all the factors in dispute are combined in one symbol, namely language, ‘and quarrels and struggles in very different areas (politics, economy, administration, education) appear under the heading language conflict’. According to Nelde, politicians and economic leaders in such a situation ‘operate under the assumption of language conflict’ and in doing so they disregard what are the real underlying causes and so language comes to assume a greater importance than it had when the conflict began. The stage is reached where this ‘language-oriented “surface structure” then obscures the more deeply rooted, suppressed “deep structure” (social and economic problems)’. ¹¹² There is little doubt that in 1976 all the “deep structure” indicators pointed to Māori people being socially and economically disadvantaged in New Zealand. ¹¹³

Benton describes the *kura kaupapa Māori* as schools ‘which are also community based, but with a much more prominent role for university educated intellectuals than the *kohanga reo*’. He says that they were first organised in the mid-1980s when it became obvious that the state-run school system could not and would not provide an adequate education in Māori for children from the *kohanga reo* who were entering into primary school. The leaders of the movement were aware of the success of immersion programmes in Canada, and similar approaches in Ireland and the Basque Country, and they rejected bilingual education in English and Māori as a ‘dangerous compromise’, given ‘the tenuous position of Māori in New Zealand society’. ¹¹⁴ Three years later, the Ministry of Māori Development was pointing to ‘very encouraging signs’ of increased minority language use and revitalisation in Europe with specific reference to Welsh, Euskera and Catalan. ¹¹⁵ The assertion made in the plenary debates was that linguistic diversity constituted an opportunity rather than a problem within an existing Member State and it is worth recalling that a number of references in those debates were made to the Welsh language ‘flourishing’ in co-existence with a ‘dominant’ English language. Towards the end of the fifth parliamentary term, when the issue was raised as to whether minority languages posed a threat to state culture and territorial integrity, one Member not merely declared that he was proud to be a

speaker of a minority language [Welsh] but also affirmed that he was like many others in the Parliament in only wanting ‘to live a full life through the medium of our language’. ¹¹⁶

Mutu notes that the “revitalisation” of Māori, to use the term from the *Aotearoa* Report, is ‘proving difficult when this generation of second language speakers cannot fully communicate with its native speakers’. She acknowledges that at present some teachers are content to let their students speak Māori without insisting on “correct” grammar. However, she cannot foresee the emergence of some new hybrid language that could only best be described as Manglish. Her belief is that ‘given the strong cultural pull to the past and the deeds of the ancestors, it is fundamentally crucial that the following generations continue to be able to access the models of language they are leaving and have left behind’. Therefore, Mutu’s conclusion is that inevitably ‘the wheel will turn full circle and come back to the Biggs approach, a combination of studying the grammar and the speech of those ancestors whose voices and writings have been preserved’. ¹¹⁷

In fact, the same Act of Parliament which gave “official” status to the Māori language in New Zealand also established the Māori Language Commission. This government-appointed body, which is responsible to the Minister of Māori Affairs, not only examines and licenses interpreters but also creates new technical Māori vocabulary and, as Benton puts it, ‘purges the written language at least of unnecessary English-derived forms’. ¹¹⁸ Almost one and seventy years earlier, in 1820, the first real written grammar of Māori had been the product of Professor Lee at Cambridge University who was assisted in his work by the chiefs Hongi Hika and Waikato who were in England at the time for the purposes of trade.

For his part, Biggs, writing before the establishment of the Māori Language Commission, did not support those whom he labelled “purists” ‘who decry the legitimate use of English loan-words’ and who forget that ‘English itself owes its richness to precisely the same kind of borrowing, which has continued on a massive scale for centuries’. This was especially the case for the Māori language in what Biggs termed ‘most fields of Western ‘higher learning’’. ¹¹⁹ The concerns expressed by Biggs show the potential value of the Māori Language Commission.

The following words written by Biggs forty years ago are noteworthy and would have comfortably resonated with those Members of the European Parliament who advocated in the plenary debates between 2000 and 2003 on behalf of minority indigenous languages:

‘It is perhaps the effort to validate membership of the Māori community that is the most powerful factor in the retention of Māori language on the general New Zealand scene. That and the positive feeling-tone towards the language as a symbol of Māoritanga. So we find the language persisting strongly in association with those institutions which are at once the most ‘Māori’; and the most strongly emotive, the *tangihanga*, the *hui*, and the Church. By attending any such gathering the individual asserts the positive value of being Māori, renews and revitalises his ties with Māoridom, and reaffirms his membership of the Māori Community ...even among those who are not fully competent in the language, Māori greetings, snatches of colloquial speech, and the ubiquitous Māori songs, are used constantly as passwords into the fraternity of Māoridom, and as affirmations of the worthwhileness of separate cultural identity, the sprat that refuses to be swallowed by the shark of assimilation’.

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Will New Zealand be in some way disadvantaged by embracing linguistic diversity as a fundamental value and giving equal rank to both English *and* Māori? In the European Parliament, the diversity of cultures was affirmed as a fundamental element of Europe, which found expression ‘first and foremost’ in the diversity of languages.¹²¹ The Verts/ALE Group was not alone in Parliament in calling on all citizens to work together to ensure that lesser used languages remained part of a culturally diverse Europe of the future. One prominent speaker who opposed any form of discrimination against a minority indigenous language was a Finn;¹²² not unexpectedly, because in Finland linguistic diversity is widely accepted with Finnish and Swedish, two mutually *unintelligible* languages, having equal rank as “official” languages. And the Ombudsman, who was from Finland, at one point deliberately concluded his report to the Parliament in his mother tongue Swedish to illustrate that ‘Finland is a bilingual country in which the linguistic minority enjoys a high level of protection’.¹²³ Finland itself is generally considered to be among the most technologically advanced countries and was judged, according to the September 2005 “Global Competitiveness Report” survey conducted by the World Economic Forum, the most competitive economy in the world for the third consecutive year.

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, referred to in Chapter Two above, argued that the granting of linguistic and cultural human rights was a step towards avoiding ethnic conflict and actually avoiding the disintegration of a state. Not unlike Peter Hans Nelde (referred to above), she asserts that ‘linguistic affiliation’ has been used and will continue to be used as ‘a rightful mobilizing factor in conflicts with multiple causes where power and resources are unevenly distributed along linguistic and ethnic lines’. Her assessment is that for most ethnic groups language is ‘one of the most important cultural core values’ and, therefore, a threat to the language of that group will be perceived by the group as not just a threat to their linguistic and cultural survival but indeed a threat ‘to its existence as a group, a people’. ¹²⁴ Her conclusion is that granting linguistic rights to minorities has the effect of reducing the potential for conflict rather than creating conflict. The PSE Group in the European Parliament stated that support for lesser used and minority indigenous languages contributed ‘apart from anything else’ to social cohesion and to preventing conflicts while the Verts/ALE Group declared that the rights of speakers of what was termed ‘historic languages’ should be formally recognised if there was to be a really democratic Europe.

In earlier chapters, reference was made to the importance of the contribution that the German Romantic *Philosophen*, such as Herder and Fichte, made to the development of language concepts throughout Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to the invention of the “nation”. At a time when education was a privilege enjoyed only by the nobility and clergy, it came to be realised that the general population would only be educated if the mother tongue was used for such purposes. Out of this realisation was born the concept that a person’s true homeland was that person’s language and this was extended to the belief that what clearly defined a nation was its language. Following the French Revolution, language as the marker of nationality was exploited as a tool of national unity, as a tool of patriotism, and, as a result, linguistic minorities were repressed because they were perceived to threaten that national unity. In New Zealand, linguistic nationalism occurred during the nineteenth century when the dominant colonial power suppressed the use of Māori, the language of the indigenous peoples who had become a minority of the population. New Zealand was effectively transformed into a ‘one nation, one language’ state.

Two years after Māori was made an “official” language, Gordon and Deverson emphasised the ‘very close link between language and group identity’ and pointed out that carelessness with the language could easily be equated with a lack of care towards its speakers. The thesis posited was that the survival of the language had been in doubt for over one hundred years and, in the circumstances, anglicising Māori contributed in the long term to the ‘absorption’ of the Māori language by the English language, a situation they described as ‘one more nail in the coffin of the indigenous language’. These authors do acknowledge that the ‘status’ of Māori began to improve in the nineteen-eighties with a number of policy initiatives and decisions the aim of which was to ‘foster the language and put it on a more equal footing with English’. Significantly, however, they added the proviso that how speakers of the dominant language approach the pronunciation of Māori words ‘remains to many an important indicator of Pākehā respect for things Māori’. ¹²⁵

There seems to be agreement among scholars that the attitudes that any population adopts towards the languages that are present in the country are important influences as to whether those languages are lost or retained. ¹²⁶ The disadvantaged social and economic status of Māori for many years – referred to above – has inevitably led to some negative stereotyping of Māori people in general and negative attitudes to the Māori language in particular. ¹²⁷ Positive attitudes towards a group using a minority language will more likely lead to that language being retained and for its use being continued from one generation to another as those who have learned the language use it with one another, marry other speakers of the language and speak it to their children.

The “Race Against Time” Report stated that cultural diversity could be one of New Zealand’s greatest assets. But this would only be achieved, according to the report, after there was general acceptance by the population that each ethnic group had the right to express its culture ‘without criticism or prejudice’ and a willingness by the population to respect and defend ‘the rights of others to their cultural expression’. ¹²⁸ The report’s philosophy appears to be that the basis for a society practising cultural tolerance and freedom of choice is acceptance by the society as a whole of the principle of “unity through diversity”. Cultural understanding along with language knowledge is viewed as essential to ensuring ‘economic advantage and greater social

harmony'.¹²⁹ It is worthwhile, in this context, to recall words spoken in the European Parliament in 2003 and referred to in Chapter Five above:

‘... it is commonly accepted that European cultural diversity is closely linked to linguistic diversity, which makes a significant contribution to our very perception of the world, to expression and creativity... There are in fact millions of Europeans who, alongside the official language of their country, speak a minority language, mainly within their communities, and this is a tradition from generation to generation which we all respect.’¹³⁰

“Cultural understanding” is certainly not always evident in correspondence to newspapers, let alone contributions to talk-back radio. A strident letter that was published in *The New Zealand Herald* in 2005 illustrates that, sixteen years on, the fears expressed by Gordon and Deverson, referred to above, about there being a lack of respect for the Māori language among some in the population appeared to be well grounded.¹³¹ And, later in the same year, when the Labour Party announced, as part of its 2005 election campaign, that all student teachers would have to prove they could pronounce Māori in order to graduate – so as ‘to ensure all teachers demonstrate competency in reo-a-waha enunciation and pronunciation’ – the proposal was met with antagonism by the Opposition Māori Affairs spokesperson. He described the proposal in these terms: ‘It is almost pathetic. This is politically correct tokenism. I hope the Prime Minister is taking some lessons. I have heard her butcher and mangle pronunciation herself.’¹³² The spokesperson’s attitude is in direct opposition to the approach favoured by the ELDR Group in the European Parliament and their viewpoint is also worth repeating from Chapter Three above:

‘[ELDR] has no doubt that culture is a fundamental component of the [European Union’s] identity. Our group believes that respect for, and promotion of, cultural and linguistic diversity and of the common cultural inheritance is an essential factor in integration and the promotion of human individuality. We want to see a European cultural policy which is not in any way aimed at uniformity but which offers the kind of identity that arises in the encounter of differences – a policy which contributes to social cohesion and which is essential to the sense of being a European citizen.’¹³³

A complaint of language discrimination taken to the Human Rights Commission illustrates entrenched attitudes that typically strike at the acceptance of linguistic diversity in New Zealand and the attainment of social harmony. The complainant alleged, and the fact was not disputed, that when she spoke in Māori to a friend, while

waiting to be served by at a dairy, the shopkeeper said to her, “This is an English speaking place didn't you know?” An argument then ensued about her speaking Māori and, after being called ‘bloody ignorant’, she left the shop without making her intended purchase. The Human Rights Commission determined that although she was not “refused” goods by the shopkeeper, she was treated less favourably in connection with their provision by being told to not speak Maori in the shop. It was not a situation where the dairy owner requested that she speak a language he could understand for the purposes of purchasing goods. What he had done was to impose a requirement that customers conversing between themselves in his shop do so in English. The discrimination was, therefore, unlawful under the race discrimination prohibition as language in that instance was clearly linked to race. However, attempts at conciliation proved unsuccessful.¹³⁴

Of course, Commissioner Reding had reminded Members of the European Parliament during the plenary debates how sensitive the issue of minority languages could be for some Member States. However, she believed the debates on linguistic diversity to take place in the Parliament and elsewhere during the European Year of Languages in 2001 would enable the problems and fears associated with minority languages to be overcome and the end result would be: ‘no more resistance to languages, because, as has been very clearly stated, there are no small languages, there are only mother tongues, which are all great languages’.¹³⁵ Interestingly, at the time her approach was regarded as too “moderate” and “conciliatory” for a number of the Scandinavian MEPs, five of whom, as noted earlier in Chapter Five, declared in writing that the European Union ought to acknowledge how invaluable the very understanding of the importance of language, including minority languages, was ‘beyond the mere one year of the present campaign’.¹³⁶

So the answer to the question does Māori occupy a privileged position in New Zealand is both “yes” and “no”. Yes, Māori does occupy a privileged position because it is the language of the *tangata whenua*, the language of the indigenous peoples, who have a right to express their cultural identity through their language, a right agreed to in 1840 by the signatories to the Treaty of Waitangi which was the document upon which modern New Zealand is founded. Yet the answer to the question raised is also “no” because while Māori is now *de jure* an “official” language, *de facto* it does not

enjoy anywhere near like equal status with English. In the public domain rarely are the two languages used side by side, other than in traditional ceremonies. Even in the court system, where the Māori language has been legislated for, prior notice has to be given of its intended use. Moreover, anything other than token linguistic diversity in New Zealand is a frightening prospect for many people who seem wedded to the idea of “one nation, one language” and who interpret any request for such diversity to be more fully implemented as nothing more than a demand for “political correctness” as the Opposition Māori Affairs spokesperson demonstrated in 2005 or as “unproductive” as the correspondent to the newspaper quoted at the start of this section insinuated.

A major challenge ahead for the Māori language is that it not suffer the same fate as will, according to Spolsky,¹³⁷ befall some other indigenous minority languages. Spolsky was referring to languages such as Irish whereby the national language policy, while having succeeded in maintaining the status and teaching of that language, has not been able to achieve its widespread use or the restoration of its vitality. However, Eruera Tarena of Ngāi Tahu is not pessimistic, believing that Māori has shifted from a language spoken by old people in formal occasions on the marae ‘to a language spoken by young people within the home’. Moreover, it is these young fluent speakers that are ‘fast becoming young fluent parents’:

‘As a nation we already share one language. Progressively, as Māori continue to share the indigenous language of this country and more and more Pākehā come to appreciate it, our nation will have a much more open mind to language and culture and a better understanding of what makes us unique and gives us our national character.’¹³⁸

These words could very easily have come from the lips of one of any number of Members of the European Parliament between 2000 and 2003 while advocating social cohesion through respect for the principle of linguistic diversity.

¹ Paul Coûteaux [EDD] (FR) 2 July 2002

² Paul Coûteaux [EDD] (FR) 19 November 2002

³ Paul Coûteaux [EDD] (FR) 20 March 2003

⁴ For example, Frank Vanhecke [NI] (BE): ‘... certainly including Dutch, my language, which is spoken by more than 21 million Europeans. And I am quite aware that this will, of course, entail a considerable additional cost. We should accept this as the price we have to pay if we want to retain this diversity which makes up the richness of our continent.’ 9 April 2002

- ⁵ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES) 3 October 2000
- ⁶ Koldo Gorostiaga Atxalandabaso [NI] (ES) 20 October 2000
- ⁷ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 4 June 2003
- ⁸ Josu Ortuondo Larrea [Verts/ALE] (ES) 3 September 2003
- ⁹ Rosa Díez González [PSE] (ES): ‘... whenever fascist and totalitarian acts committed by ETA in one part of Europe strip us of our freedom, people elsewhere in Europe must feel that our freedom, everyone’s freedom – whatever a person’s nationality, language, culture or religion – is under threat.’ 21 September 2000
- ¹⁰ Elisabeth Schroedter [Verts/ALE] (DE) 3 July 2000: Montfort
- ¹¹ José Ribeiro e Castro [UEN] (PT) 13 February 2001 See also: Elizabeth Montfort [UEN] (FR): ‘... it [the joint resolution on the Nice European Council] violates one of the most basic of human rights, the right to nationhood.’ 30 November 2000 and ‘Some Member States, who practise linguistic partition on a daily basis, know that this inevitably leads to political partition and the collapse of a sense of nationhood.’ 14 December 2000
- ¹² Efstratios Korakas [GUE/NGL] (HE) 14 May 2001
- ¹³ Frank Vanhecke [NI] (BE) 17 December 2001
- ¹⁴ <http://europa.eu/languages>
- ¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/orban/index_en.htm
- ¹⁶ Ján Figel’: “Commission ready to welcome three new official languages on 1 January 2007”, IP/06/1854, 20 December 2006.
- ¹⁷ Ján Figel’: “European Day of Languages 2006”, 25 September 2006
- ¹⁸ On his webpage (http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/figel/index_en.htm) Ján Figel’ has these words: ‘European-level actions on **Culture** are indispensable for promoting our common values, a sense of European citizenship and to support an evolving European identity. Concretely, I will strive to bring about a better understanding of others’ cultures and wider recognition of a common heritage, while fully respecting cultural diversity.’
- ¹⁹ Leonard Orban: “Multilingualism is in the genetic code of the Union” Meeting with the Culture Committee, Brussels, Speech/07/104, 27 February 2007
- ²⁰ Leonard Orban: “A political agenda for multilingualism”, Press Release Reference: MEMO/07/80, 23 February 2007
- ²¹ Leonard Orban: “Multilingualism boosts European competitiveness”, Press Release Reference: IP/07/230, 23 February 2007
- ²² Leonard Orban: “Capitalising on European Enlargement”, East capital summit, Bucharest, Speech/07/138, 9 March 2007
- ²³ Leonard Orban: “Europe in a changing world”, Rome, Speech/07/174, 24 March 2007
- ²⁴ Leonard Orban: “[Commissioner Orban, on his first official visit to Germany, consulted the Bundestag over the strategy for multilingualism](#)”, Press Release, 25 April 2007
- ²⁵ Leonard Orban: “Multilingualism is one ingredient of European citizenship”, Berlin, Speech/07/256, 26 April 2007
- ²⁶ Leonard Orban: ‘... with the first regulation adopted, namely Regulation No 1 of 1958, determining the languages to be used by the then European Economic Community. And the decision was to put all the official languages on the same footing.’ “Can language diversity help towards creating a European identity?” – Germany in the margins of the philology symposium, Osnabrück University, 27 April 2007
- ²⁷ Leonard Orban: “No discrimination for the use of the official or procedural languages will be allowed”, Press Release, 8 May 2007
- ²⁸ Leonard Orban: “Day of Cyrillic Alphabet”, Sofia, Speech/07/330, 24 May 2007
- ²⁹ Noted in Press review: “Commissioner Orban visited Spain to get in touch with the Spanish linguistic situation” 08-09/06/2007. In fact, Orban was in Spain on “Multilingualism business” on 7 June as well.
- ³⁰ Leonard Orban: Speech/07/384 at the Forum “New Enomomy”, Madrid, 8 June 2007

- ³¹ Leonard Orban: 'It [multilingualism] is a key channel for social cohesion and inter-cultural dialogue and for nurturing a space for European political dialogue.' "Multilingualism – fundamental value of the European Union", Bucharest, Speech/07/412, 22 June 2007
- ³² Leonard Orban: "Speaking with one voice, and in many languages", IATE opening ceremony, Speech/07/436, Brussels, 28 June 2007
- ³³ Leonard Orban: "Languages are a bridge for intercultural dialogue", Speech/07/448 to "The Group of Intellectuals for Intercultural Dialogue", Brussels, 29 June 2007
- ³⁴ Leonard Orban: 'Je sais qu'en France, on est parfois irrité par la place croissante de l'anglais comme langue de communication internationale.' "Splendeurs du patrimoine linguistique", Université d'été "jouer le jeu" organisé par le MEDEF, Speech/07/496, Jouy-en-Josas, 30 August 2007
- ³⁵ Leonard Orban: "Towards a lingua franca of the Mediterranean? Multilingualism in Europe", Lectio Magistralis for the XIII International Summer School, Speech/07/529, Gorizia, 14 September 2007
- ³⁶ Leonard Orban: "The Multilingualism allows EU citizens to exert their democratic rights", Speech/07/565, Brussels, 26 September 2007
- ³⁷ Leonard Orban: "The diversity of languages – an opportunity, not an obstacle", Speech to the European Dissemination Conference, Brussels, 27 September 2007
- ³⁸ Leonard Orban: "Europe's culture a reversible fabric", Speech/07/590 to the Cultural Committee of the European Parliament, Brussels, 3 October 2007
- ³⁹ See footnote ⁴³ below
- ⁴⁰ Leonard Orban: "How to create a real system of multilingualism", Audition at the Sénat français, Paris, 9 October 2007
- ⁴¹ Leonard Orban: "Europe's culture a reversible fabric", Speech/07/590 to the Cultural Committee of the European Parliament, Brussels, 3 October 2007
- ⁴² Leonard Orban: "Multilingualism for the benefit of citizens", Speech to the Plenary Session of the Committee of Regions, Brussels, 10 October 2007
- ⁴³ Leonard Orban: "Multilingualism is a plus-factor for European integration, competitiveness, growth and better jobs", Speech at the European Voice debate on "What do Languages Mean for Business", Brussels, 6 December 2007
During this speech he referred again to the large number participating in the on-line languages consultation, which up to this point had received over 2400 responses – "when, often, the Commission is receiving a couple of hundred." He added, "This is not surprising. Citizens view this [Multilingualism] policy as a means to articulate a democratic right: to understand [European Union] policy and to be understood by the institutions. Seen from this perspective, the cost of multilingualism – roughly the price of a coffee per citizen per year – is negligible and, in any event, is the cost of democracy."
- ⁴⁴ Leonard Orban: "Multilingualism – a fundamental of the European Union", Speech to a Conference at the Romanian-American University, Bucharest, 25 January 2008
- ⁴⁵ Leonard Orban: "Why and where do languages matter? Towards a comprehensive strategy for multilingualism", Speech/08/83, Ministerial Conference on "Promoting Multilingualism: a shared commitment", Brussels, 15 February 2008
- ⁴⁶ Leonard Orban: "Languages – the European Identity Card", Speech at the Vilnius Book Fair open discussion, Vilnius, 21 February 2008
- ⁴⁷ Leonard Orban: "Enlargement and Diversity in the European Union", Speech at St. Anthony's College, Oxford, 3 March 2008
- ⁴⁸ Leonard Orban: "Multilingualism as part of European integration", Speech at the Warsaw University, Warsaw, 7 March 2008
- ⁴⁹ Leonard Orban: "Multilingualism – essential for the unity in diversity of the European Union", Speech/08/132, Debate at the College of Europe, Natolin, 7 March 2008
Orban took the opportunity, as he had done on so many occasions in the previous twelve months, to reiterate yet again his views on the role of English: 'Of course English has a place

as the lingua franca of international communication. But on its own it cannot provide the competitive edge that Europe needs.'

⁵⁰ Leonard Orban: Speech to the Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament, Brussels, 31 March 2008

Orban told the Committee that there other 'issues to be tackled' but the ambitions for the Commission's Communication on future language strategy would be threefold: 'first, to position multilingualism firmly as a policy in its own right, by underlining its contribution to prosperity and citizenship; second, to promote multilingualism in all relevant European programmes and initiatives, from Social Fund to JLS initiatives, and to invite Member States to do the same nationally; third, to establish a permanent dialogue with Member States, Parliament, with the other [European Union] institutions and with stakeholders, to regularly review and promote multilingualism policy.

⁵¹ Leonard Orban: "Tradition and Cultural Diversity: Multilingualism as Instrument for a Trans-boundary Europe", Speech at the Clingendael Institute for International Relations, The Hague, 2 April 2008

⁵² The Nederlandse Taalunie or Dutch Language Union, founded on 9 September 1980, is the institution that defines the standard Dutch language, Algemeen Nederlands, and discusses issues relating to Nederlandse.

⁵³ Leonard Orban: "Making the most of Europe's linguistic diversity", Speech at a Public Hearing, Brussels, 15 April 2008

⁵⁴ Leonard Orban: Speech on Europe Day – a celebration of progress made together, Italian prize giving for the L'Europa alla lavagna [Europe on the blackboard] and Viaggio in Europa [Travel in Europe] competitions for creating internet sites on the European Union, Palazzo del Quirinale, Rome, 9 May 2008

⁵⁵ Leonard Orban: "The launch of the European Network to promote linguistic diversity", Speech, Brussels, 11 June 2008

⁵⁶ Leonard Orban: "The contribution of multilingualism/language learning to intercultural dialogue", Speech to the "Informal Conference of European Ministers of Education", Oslo, 6 June 2008

⁵⁷ Leonard Orban: 'Since there are only a limited number of interpreters with Latvian as a passive language in the other booths, Latvian interpreters are generally expected to have a second active language, and to be able to work from Latvian into English, French or other languages.' Speech: "The Latvian Language in the European Union – Multilingualism in Practice", Riga, 3 July 2008

⁵⁸ Presentation of the Communication "Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment" adopted by the European Commission on 18 September 2008, Press Conference, Brussels, 18 September 2008

Other salient points in the Communication included:

- * The Commission will create two permanent platforms for the exchange of good practice: One for the business community, social partners, trade organisations, chambers of commerce, schools and education authorities, And the other one for the media, cultural organisations and other civil society stakeholders to discuss and exchange practices to promote multilingualism for intercultural dialogue.

- * The Commission will also use European Union programmes to support teaching of more languages through lifelong learning, teacher and student mobility, and research and development of innovative methods adapted to different target groups.

- * The Commission will draw up an inventory of best practice in language learning and teaching and make it available to Member States.

- * The Commission will support subtitling and the circulation of European media productions,

- * The Commission will run awareness-raising campaigns on the benefits of linguistic diversity and language learning for intercultural dialogue.

- * Together with the Member States, the Commission will exchange good practice for training legal interpreters and translators and develop specific translation tools in order to improve access to justice.

* In implementing this strategy, the Commission will be working together with Member States, the European Institutions, with civil society, the media, cultural organisations and business media.

* In partnership with Member States, the Commission will carry out a global review in 2012.

⁵⁹ Leonard Orban: “A New Strategy for Multilingualism: a strategy for all European Union citizens”, Speech to the Committee on Culture of the European Parliament, Brussels, 6 October 2008

⁶⁰ Leonard Orban: “La traduction – la langue de toutes les langues”, Speech, Copenhagen, 10 October 2008

A possible translation might be: Indeed, one of the foundations of our European citizenship consists of the coexistence of different languages which come into contact with one another and in doing so enrich one another.

⁶¹ Leonard Orban: “The Importance of Looking Outwards, Not Inwards”, Speech to the Conference “Broadening Horizons”, Bristol, 17 October 2008

⁶² Leonard Orban: Speech to the National Forum on the Maltese Language, Valetta, 15 November 2008

Commissioner Orban’s comments below on the mutual benefits that follow when a new “official language” is added on a country’s accession to the European Union are worth quoting:

‘Maltese citizens can now address the institutions of their Union in Maltese. They can consult the laws and official documents of the Union in Maltese. A new translation industry has flourished, providing job opportunities for those who speak Maltese. And let’s not forget the impact that entry has had on the language itself. Being made an official language of our Union not only raises the profile of a language. It also emboldens and enhances it. It prompts translators and experts to unearth lexical treasures and bring them back into common use. These activities keep the language healthy and help it evolve... Europe enriches the Maltese language. And of course, the Maltese language enriches Europe too. Over the last few days I have had the chance to listen to your language; to appreciate its lilting melody; to marvel at its eclectic-ness and eccentricities. With its unique blend of Semitic roots, Roman script and vocabulary drawn from Sicilian, Italian and English, it is a true gem in our mosaic of languages. It is a true source of richness for Europe... You have shown that multilingualism works! I know that it has not always been easy. Protecting your heritage requires investment and effort.’

⁶³ Leonard Orban: “Integration, expansion, globalisation – a new multilingual challenge for Europe”, Speech to the European Language Council Forum 2008, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels, 5 December 2008

⁶⁴ Arabela Iris Ster, Assistant in the Cabinet of Commissioner Orban, European Commission, in an email to the writer of this thesis, 10 February 2009

⁶⁵ “Row harms Slovak-Hungarian ties”, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 31 August 2006

⁶⁶ Chris Morris (BBC News, Brussels): “Language dispute divides Belgium”, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 15 May 2005 ‘ “It bothers me as a Flemish person that people who come and live here don't want to adapt,” says an elderly resident of the town of Vilvoorde. “Immigrants have to learn our language, but the French don't. What does that tell you?” “This is not a technicality any more,” says Michel De Meulenaere, the National Editor of *Le Soir* newspaper. “We have to ask more fundamental questions. What do we have in common, and do we still have the will to live together in a united country?” ’

⁶⁷ “Belgian town bans school French”, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 1 September 2006 ‘The mayor dismissed suggestions that the ban violated human rights, saying the schools were being funded by Flemish communities who were responsible for safeguarding the Dutch language.’

⁶⁸ “Giant pillow fight mocks Belgian regional rivalry”, *Reuters*, October 18 2007 “‘We are just people regardless of what politicians or the media on both sides of the region say,” said Frank Vanaerschot, an organiser disguised as a giant yellow lion, the symbol of the northern,

Dutch-speaking Flanders region. Flemish Christian Democrat leader, Yves Leterme, had won a June parliamentary election with a mandate from Dutch-speaking voters to devolve more powers to regions.'

⁶⁹ "Miss Belgium fails her first test", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 17 December 2007 'In halting Dutch, Ms Poulicek told the Flemish network, VRT: "I have to try to learn more." She then went on in French: "I spoke almost no Dutch when I started this adventure." That has not impressed the Flemish-language press. *Het Laatste Nieuws* said on Monday Belgium's "community crisis ... has insinuated itself into even the lightest sector".'

⁷⁰ <http://nzherald.co.nz>, 25 March 2006 ' "I have to say I was profoundly shocked to see a Frenchman express himself in English at the [European Union] Council table. That's why the French delegation and myself walked out rather than listen to that," Chirac said.'

One commentator, Mark Mardell (BBC Europe editor, Brussels), described Chirac's response as 'either an inability to face up to the real world or a brave stand against the crushing force of Anglo-Saxon hegemony' or both! According to the same commentator, the incident highlighted the reality of France's position within the European Union, which had been changing over the previous decade. 'Once French was the main language of the [European Union], the only language that everyone had to speak... The entry of the Scandinavian states, then the Eastern European ones, changed all that.' from "French pride tested at EU summit", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 24 March 2006

Also: "Chirac upset by English address", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 24 March 2006

⁷¹ "UK language barbarians", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm> 29 July 2004 'A poll of 1500 British workers by recruitment firm, Office Angels, found that about eighty per cent said they thought they could get by at work because "everyone speaks English".'

⁷² *ibid* 'In 2000 British universities appealed to the Goethe Institute, which promotes German culture worldwide, for help in stemming a dramatic decline in learning German. The Institute's marketing director, Karl Pfeiffer, said: "Languages, and German in particular, were very weak in the [United Kingdom]. All the languages seem to suffer from the problem that language in general is seen to be not that essential."'

⁷³ Mario Cacciottolo: "Reading paper gets Polish edition", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 13 October 2006

⁷⁴ "Scots 'mither tongue' goes online", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 12 August 2007

⁷⁵ "Irish language law takes effect", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 28 March 2005

⁷⁶ "Do you know the way to An Daingenan", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 20 October 2006. 'In fact, some people living in and around the town, think ditching Dingle, a catchy, memorable sort of a name, was a big mistake. They argue that the internationally-known "Dingle brand", familiar to people in the US, the UK and beyond, is in danger of being lost. There have been anecdotes about tourists taking wrong turns as they try to follow signs to the town along Kerry's roads. A greater concern is that if fewer tourists make their way - or find their way - to An Daingean, then local businesses will pay the price.'

⁷⁷ "Latvia grapples with EU over euro", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 3 January 2006. "'The 'eu' diphthong is alien to the Latvian language," says Latvia's education minister Ina Druviete. Last month, Malta said it would spell the currency's name "ewro", while Lithuania and Hungary have agreed to use their own spelling in domestic life and the euro spelling in official texts.'

⁷⁸ Laura Sheeter: "Vilnius launches 'language buses'", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 20 September 2006

⁷⁹ Laura Sheeter: "Lithuanian Jews revive Yiddish", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/default.stm>, 1 February 2007. 'The head of the nursery school [Rita Kozhevato] says these children are at the forefront of the fight to save Yiddish. "If the children don't learn Yiddish, the language will simply die," she says. "If we teach them, then they'll pass it on to their children and grandchildren. But if we let the language die

with our grandparents then that will be it.” Rafael Karpis, an opera student at the Vilnius Music Academy, has performed Yiddish songs at concerts around the world. [Karpis] believes that the only way to make sure Yiddish survives is to interest all Lithuanians in the country’s Jewish history and art, and above all, its music.’

⁸⁰ Benton (1996: 62)

⁸¹ Tīmoti S Kāretu – “Māori language rights in New Zealand” in *Linguistic Human Rights: Overcoming Linguistic Discrimination* – eds Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Phillipson (1995) (p 209)

Kāretu adds: ‘As Dr Pawley of the University of Auckland said in his paper entitled On The Place of Māori in New Zealand Life: Present and Future, “... New Zealanders probably have less respect for culture and tradition than any other nation – the pioneering peasant mentality still dominates here. If something is no use we have no time for it. And most of the electorate have no use for Māori”.’

Kāretu also makes this point: ‘The arrogant assumption is that all should speak English on all occasions and yet as Dr Tāmāti Reedy says in his report, *Developing an Official Māori Language Policy for Government* (1985: 5), “The fact that English is now the only working language for the vast bulk of Māoridom has not brought about the societal unity promised by the anti-Māori language policies of the past 150 years.’ (p 212)

⁸² Ian Mandley in *The Press*, Christchurch 15 December 2008

⁸³ Integrity: Honesty, responsibility, accountability and being ethical; Respect and care: Of and for self and others, for beliefs and for human rights; Excellence: Achievement, perseverance and resilience; Environmental sustainability: Respect and care for the Earth and its ecosystems; Inquiry and curiosity: Creative, critical and reflective thinking; Community: Quality of relationships, generosity of spirit and participation for the common good; Equity: Fairness, social justice and equal opportunity for all.

⁸⁴ The same forecast shows there will also be 420,000 Pacific Islanders living in New Zealand by 2021 – half of whom will be under twenty-four years of age.

⁸⁵ Grant Robertson: ‘A modern, inclusive New Zealand needs to ensure that we acknowledge the place and role of Maori in New Zealand as tangata whenua [local people], and the Treaty of Waitangi. I would like to promote one small step in that regard. I believe that Te Reo Maori should be taught in all schools, for all pupils up until at least age 14. Learning a language is one of the keys to understanding a culture, and in this case that is our own culture.’ Address to the New Zealand Parliament, 11 December 2008

<http://www.grantrobertson.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/maiden-speech-for-website.doc>

⁸⁶ The National Party billboard below from the 2005 election campaign sought to contrast its support for one New Zealand (Kiwi) with Labour’s perceived support for policies which would benefit Māori only (Iwi = Māori tribe, Māori people).



The billboard demonstrates, and might even be seen to deliberately encourage, the confusion that exists in the minds of so many New Zealanders between nationality and ethnicity, and also makes the claim that nationality in some way legitimately subsumes all ethnicities, whether indigenous or otherwise.

⁸⁷ *The New Zealand Herald* 15 May 2005.

⁸⁸ ‘The New Zealand census paints a linguistic picture of this country as a monolingual nation, where English prevails, where Māori is struggling and where languages other than English are restricted to their particular ethnic group’ – Roger Peddie in “Planning for the future? Languages policy in New Zealand” in *Languages of New Zealand* – eds Allan Bell, Ray Harlow and Donna Starks (2005) page 25

⁸⁹ John Roughan *The New Zealand Herald* 3 September 2005.

⁹⁰ Margaret Mutu (2005: 17)

⁹¹ John Roughan *The New Zealand Herald* 3 September 2005

⁹² The signatories were referred to in the Treaty as “The Confederation of the United Tribes of New Zealand and the Separate and Independent Chiefs”.

⁹³ Joe Williams *Back to the Future: Māori Survival in the 1990s* (A Paper to the Commonwealth Law Conference, Auckland, 1990). Williams is currently the chief judge of the Māori Land Court and the chairperson of the Waitangi Tribunal.

□ The Māori Text of Article The Second (Ko Te Tuatahi) of the Treaty of Waitangi (with the orthography of the time) reads: ‘Ko te Kuini o Ingarani ka wakarite ka wakaake ki nga Rangitira ki nga hapu - ki nga tangata katoa o Nu Tirani te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa’.

□ The English text of the same Article reads: ‘Her Majesty the Queen of England confirms and guarantees to the Chiefs and Tribes of New Zealand and to the respective families and individuals thereof the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession.’

□ The New Zealand Government website, www.treatyofwaitangi.govt.nz, has the following annotation: ‘In the Māori text of the Treaty, Māori were guaranteed “te tino rangatiratanga” – the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands “wenua”, villages “kainga”, and all their property/treasures “taonga katoa”. In the English text of the Treaty, Māori leaders and people, collectively and individually, were confirmed and guaranteed “exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, fisheries and other properties”.’

⁹⁴ The Ministry of Maori Development - Te Puni Kōkiri – published *Te Tūāoma The Māori Language: The Steps That Have Been Taken* in 1999.

□ The following quotation is from p 6:

‘New Zealand was once a country in which everyone spoke Māori. Even the whalers, sealers, traders, missionaries and the first settlers in the closing years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century learnt Māori, with many becoming fluent in the language. In this period almost every Pākehā needed to be able to speak Māori in order to survive. In the same period a few Māori became bilingual in Māori and English, with Māori being the stronger of the two languages in almost all cases. With the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, the language situation gradually changed. More and more English-speaking settlers, administrators and troops came to New Zealand with the result that fewer and fewer Pākehā learnt Māori. One consequence was that many Māori had to use more and more English in their dealings with Pākehā. This development was reinforced by the assimilationist orientations of most of those in the colonial governments.’

□ And also from the same page:

‘... in the mid to late 1970s the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) conducted a wide-ranging survey on the state of the Māori language. This showed that the Māori language was in a perilous state. A second survey, the National Māori Language Survey in 1995, confirmed the findings of the NZCER survey. From a healthy, living language, Māori had become an endangered language, a language struggling to survive. Moreover, it was clear that the language that had once been the primary means of communication for most people in New Zealand, and for most Māori until the 1950s, was no longer recognised by all New Zealanders as a valuable part of New Zealand society. There was popular resistance to the notion that Māori language should be a legitimate part in New Zealand society.’

⁹⁵ Margaret Mutu (2004: 14) P M Ryan’s *A Dictionary of Modern Māori* gives the translation of *whānau* as sub-tribe. For a more exacting translation of *whānau* see footnote ²⁸ below.

⁹⁶ Bruce Biggs (1968: 73)

⁹⁷ Bruce Biggs (1968: 72)

□ Erik Schwimmer (1966) *World of the Māori* – AH and AW Reed – has written: ‘Only in the remote rural areas do we find Māori communities where people talk to each other exclusively in the Māori language.’ (p 127)

□ An ‘alternative reading’ of events is put forward by Bernard Spolsky: ‘At first glance, it seems not unreasonable to interpret the observable facts in conventional postcolonial terms, with all the normal villains (missionaries, colonial administrators, and settlers) and victims (native peoples and their languages), as colonial language destruction followed by postmodern rescue efforts. In this paper, however, I wish to argue for an alternative reading, one that sees the process as the continued effort of two groups of people sharing common space, each taking an active role in negotiating the way in which that sharing should be instantiated as regards language choice. In these terms, it is the continuation of a process that started two centuries ago, when the autochthonous inhabitants of New Zealand and the European settlers began to negotiate an accommodation with each other, politically, socially, economically, culturally, and linguistically.’ – “Māori Lost and Regained” in *Languages of New Zealand* – eds Allan Bell, Ray Harlow and Donna Starks (2005) (pp 68, 69)

⁹⁸ Bruce Biggs (1968: 75)

⁹⁹ Spolsky op cit (p 72)

¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth Gordon and Tony Deverson (1989: 52)

¹⁰¹ Erik Schwimmer op cit p 128 has written: ‘The general policy of teaching Māori children a high standard of English had the full support of the leaders of the Young Māori Party, on the grounds that it was indispensable for progress in the modern world.’

¹⁰² For example: Maria Sanders-ten Holte [ELDR] (NL) 15 January 2003

¹⁰³ For an outline of how Māori became an endangered language and an outline of what Māori and Government have done to further the revitalisation of the Māori language, as well as the challenge ahead, see *Te Tūāoma The Māori Language: The Steps That Have Been Taken* (1999) op cit.

□ Typically, the arguments advanced against Māori being recognized an official language of New Zealand include:

- .there is no need for recognition because Māori people can speak English anyway;
- .the Māori language cannot meet the needs of modern society;
- .English is an international language and, therefore, much more useful than Māori;
- .most New Zealanders cannot speak or understand Māori;
- .official recognition will become too expensive;
- .minority languages always die out eventually so why try to save Māori by giving it official recognition;
- .the Māori people are only a minority in New Zealand and should not be allowed to force the majority to adopt their standards and values;
- .official recognition is an empty gesture of no benefit to anyone;
- .there is not enough time available now to meet the educational needs of our children;
- .if Māori is to be given official recognition, we will have to recognise other ethnic languages as well – for example, Samoan, Tongan, Chinese;
- .if Māori is given official recognition it will cause divisions in the community.

[Taken from the submissions of the Waitangi Tribunal – Finding of the Waitangi Tribunal relating to Te Reo Māori and a claim lodged by Huirangi Waikarapuru and Nga Kaiwhakapumau i Te Reo Incorporated Society (the Wellington Board of Māori Language), issued 29 April 1986. Wellington: New Zealand Government Printer]

¹⁰⁴ Elena Paciotti [PSE] (IT) 3 October 2000

¹⁰⁵ W K Hastings (1988) *The Right To An Education In Māori: The Case From International Law* Victoria University Press for the Institute of Policy Studies (p 35)

The conclusions Hastings draws with respect to the right of the Māori people at international law to Māori language instruction include (p 37):

‘The Māori people are a minority at international law and are thus subject to the linguistic minority protection provision of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and

Political Rights. This is a collective right. Individual members of the Māori minority share with everyone else the right to an education recognised in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This is an individual right. Members of the Māori minority also benefit from the limited collective right in Article 5 of the Convention Against Discrimination in Education to use their own language in their own schools.'

□ For another exposition of international and domestic law perspectives with regard to Māori language rights in New Zealand, see Chris Lane "Language in New Zealand human rights law" in *Proceedings of the Conference, "Bilingualism at the Ends of the Earth" University of Waikato, November 2000* – eds Roger Barnard and Ray Harlow – Victoria University Press 2001

Lane concludes (p 99): 'Language is something of a poor relation in New Zealand human rights law, when compared with other characteristics of human individuals and groups. Discrimination on the grounds of language can only be tackled in domestic law as an indirect way of discriminating on other grounds such as race, ethnic or national origin, or disability, and the law is less stringent on indirect discrimination... Section 20 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act (NZBORA) 1990 guarantees a collective minority language right, but it is unclear whether this is a negative right not to be prevented from using a language, or a positive right to government support in maintaining and developing minority languages. The NZBORA guarantees certain rights to persons suspected or accused of crimes, and provides or implies a right to a competent interpreter where necessary to understand and exercise those rights. New Zealand human rights law thus provides a partial and piecemeal framework of language policy and language rights in New Zealand.'

¹⁰⁶ The other "official" language of New Zealand is Sign Language

¹⁰⁷ The Supreme Court of New Zealand, based in Wellington, has replaced the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as the final court of appeal in the New Zealand judicial system and now hears appeals from the Court of Appeal.

¹⁰⁸ For example: '... an unsatisfactory situation, which could be greatly improved by the development of a comprehensive national languages policy' – Chris Lane op cit (p 100). Also: 'It is well known that New Zealand currently lacks a comprehensive national languages policy' – Lane (p 89)

□ 'New Zealand does not have and has never had a comprehensive languages policy' – Roger Peddie op cit (p 30)

□ '[New Zealand] has managed to avoid proclaiming an explicit language policy' – Spolsky op cit (p 76). Spolsky does recognise, however, that as a result of Māori initiatives, but with very little government support, a national Maori language policy was emerging by the 1990s.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Benton (1996: 73)

¹¹⁰ Margaret Mutu (2005: 125) The Glossary offers these translations: *kohanga reo* = 'language nest; Māori language immersion pre-schools'; *kura kaupapa Māori* = 'school [based on] Māori philosophy and principles'; *whānau* = 'extended family grouping'; *hapū* = 'grouping of several *whānau* associated genealogically and with a particular locality'.

¹¹¹ Wira Gardiner "Restoring Māori Civil Society" in *Exploring Civil Society* ed Michael James 1998 New Zealand Business Round Table (p 67) Gardiner describes *kohanga reo* as a 'simple yet profoundly significant pre-school initiative'.

¹¹² Hans Peter Nelde (1991: 61)

¹¹³ These "deep structure" indicators include life expectancy, educational attainment, income levels, housing, health, and prison population numbers. That many social indicators reveal that Māori New Zealanders experience a lower level of welfare than non-Māori has been referred to regularly since 1976. Just some examples include the following:

□ "Race Against Time", a report issued in 1982 by the Race Relations Conciliator, Hiwi Tauroa, advocates, says the Foreword to the report, '... not only a change in direction... Its major emphasis is on social change, on better understanding between people, on the deliberate elimination of "institutionalised discrimination through traditional practice" and the building of a true multicultural society, based on equality of opportunity in all spheres of human

activity... The call is for both majority and minority cultures to make opportunity to share their cultural wealth, through offering equal opportunity of cultural expression, together with an equal opportunity to share national resources.'

Comments are made in "Race Against Time" about the role of the Māori language in New Zealand. These include:

'To survive, usage of Māori must be promoted and encouraged in all areas of the New Zealand community on a priority basis - in the Courts of Law, in the transaction of Government business, and in the deliberations of Parliament, to mention a few. Recognition by the Government and the co-operation of other institutions, particularly the broadcasting and news media, is imperative if the language is to flourish.' (p 63)

Recommendation 6 in the Report reads: 'That the Government recognise that the teaching of Māori to all New Zealanders is of highest priority and, through the Minister of Maori Affairs, take the steps necessary to ensure the development of Māori language programmes'

Recommendation 8 reads: 'That over a twenty year period, commencing in 1982, applicants for a wide range of occupations should be required to demonstrate evidence of a conversational facility in Māori or a Polynesian language and a general appreciation of Māori and Pacific Islanders and their cultures. At subsequent five yearly intervals a new list of occupations could be added which would require new entrants to gain a certain level of proficiency while, at the same time, the level of proficiency required could be steadily increased for new entrants to professions or occupations that had been earlier added to the list.' (p 64)

□ A Royal Commission on Social Policy Te Kōmihana A Te Karauna Mō Ngā Āhuetanga-Ā-Iwi reported in April 1988. Among its conclusions were the following:

'Inequalities between Māori and non-Māori in work, education, income levels, home ownership and health, reflect a lack of regard for the Treaty [of Waitangi] in the development of social policies.' (p 14); 'Māori participation in [New Zealand] society is low' (p 16); 'A range of measures of participation and attainment shows that Māori people as a whole do not get the amount or quality which they need for their future wellbeing. As well, the education system does not provide them with knowledge of their own language or tikanga (customs and culture). We believe that existing education structures must be changed so that Māori people have control over their own education and so that all other New Zealanders have the opportunity to value and to develop knowledge and understanding of Māori language and tikanga.' (p 49); 'More insidious than and harder to eradicate [than personal racism] is institutional racism, defined as "a bias in our social and administrative systems that automatically benefits the dominant race or culture, while penalising minority and subordinate groups". Unlike personal racism it cannot be countered through education alone, but needs national programmes to remove biases.' (p 53)

The above quotations are taken from the summary report of conclusions and recommendations contained in the April 1988 Report of the Royal Commission. This summary report, entitled *Towards a Fair and Just Society*, was published in June 1988.

□ In December 2004, *Opportunity for All New Zealanders* was published by the Office of the Minister for Social Development and Employment, the first time, according to the Foreword, that any New Zealand government had sought to develop and publish a New Zealand Government summary statement of its strategies to improve social outcomes. Included in the document is the following: 'The disproportionate levels of unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment and poor housing among Māori must be of concern to any government. Making life better for all New Zealanders can never be achieved if New Zealand's indigenous people are left behind as a marginalised community, permanently worse off than anyone else. Important outcomes for Māori include what everyone else values as well, like good health and a high standard of living. A further outcome for Māori is to be able to live as Māori. Beyond physical need, Māori need their culture to survive and develop. Māori culture and language has no home other than New Zealand. If Māori culture dies here, it dies everywhere.' (p 15)

□ Wira Gardiner wrote in 1998: 'Statistics tell us that welfare disparity between Māori and non-Māori is not improving and may be deteriorating.' (*op. cit.* p 68)

□ Margaret McClure's *A Civilised Community: A History of Social Security in New Zealand 1898-1998* (1998) Auckland University Press deals with many of the themes incorporated in the above quotations

¹¹⁴ Richard Benton (1996: 79)

¹¹⁵ *Te Tūāoma The Māori Language: The Steps That Have Been Taken* op cit (p17)

¹¹⁶ Eurig Wyn [Verts/ALE] (UK): 'We only want to live a full life through the medium of our language, whilst not giving up, of course, the pleasure of learning and mastering many languages which open doors to cultures and windows to a better understanding of others.' 4 September 2003

¹¹⁷ Margaret Mutu (2005: 125)

¹¹⁸ Richard Benton (1996: 82)

¹¹⁹ Bruce Biggs: 'Māori speakers have borrowed extensively in those semantic fields where new cultural items and concepts became part of their general experience through the special exigencies and circumstances of the early contact between the two cultures. In political administration as it affected the people, in the field of land legislation, in farming and all aspect of rural life, Māori has borrowed widely from English lexicon, and has made syntactic and semantic modifications suited to the new situation... While a competent speaker of Māori with the requisite expertise in the fields concerned can discuss or write about fine points of law as it applies to land, while he can debate Parliamentary procedure, or points of religious doctrine, he would be hard put to discuss, in a way intelligible to his audience, nuclear physics, higher mathematics, or economics.' (1968: 72)

¹²⁰ Bruce Biggs (1968: 83) [Māoritanga = Māori culture; tangihanga = mourning; hui = gathering, meeting – "A Dictionary of Modern Māori"]

¹²¹ Othmar Karas [PPE-DE] (OS) 27 October 2000

¹²² Astrid Thors [ELDR] (SU) 14 November 2000

¹²³ Jacob-Magnus Söderman: 'Secure protection for minorities is something we could certainly export to many corners of the world.' 26 September 2002

¹²⁴ Tove Skutnabb-Kangas: 'Lack of linguistic rights often prevents a group from achieving educational, economic and political equality with other groups. Injustice caused by failure to respect linguistic human rights is thus in several ways one of the important factors which can contribute to interethnic conflict - and often does. This means that I see language-related issues as potential causes of conflict only in situations where groups lack linguistic rights and/or political/economic rights, and where the unequal distribution of political and/or economic power follows linguistic and ethnic lines.' (2000: 435)

¹²⁵ Elizabeth Gordon and Tony Deverson (1989: 52)

¹²⁶ Mary Boyce: 'The attitudes that a population holds towards the languages available in its territory have been identified as important influences on the retention or loss of those languages (see for example, Baker 1988, 1992; Fasold 1984; Fishman 1991; Giles et al. 1977; Holmes 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas 1981,2000). The speech behaviour of individuals and of whole speech communities is affected not only by the attitudes they themselves hold towards their language, but also by the attitudes of the wider population in the nation or state towards the group and its language.' – Attitudes to Māori in *Languages of New Zealand* – eds Allan Bell, Ray Harlow and Donna Starks (2005) (p 86)

Boyce adds (pp 106, 107): 'It makes sense then that the people of New Zealand, give: their responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi, should work towards a fuller understanding of the nature of attitudes towards and beliefs about Māori language as part of their commitment to enabling its survival as a living language. As well as the links between attitudes to a language and the speakers of that language, there are links between attitudes and behaviour. Positive attitudes will ideally foster beneficial language behaviour, both in the Māori speech community and in New Zealand as a whole. This is the cornerstone of the new approach taken by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, to promote Māori as something 'cool', something that young people are into, part of positive peer values, of youth solidarity. Appealing to solidarity could be a useful starting point in promoting Māori language in the wider community, as

suggested by the tendency to associate positive solidarity with voices identified as Māori. To speak Māori is to be friendly, warm, helpful, inclusive, caring. Focus on the positive.’

¹²⁷ Boyce p96

¹²⁸ “Race Against Time” published the Race Relations Conciliator (1982) (p 12)

¹²⁹ Peddie op cit (p 48)

¹³⁰ Myrsini Zorba [PSE] (HE) 4 September 2003

¹³¹ The letter which appeared in *The New Zealand Herald* 10 June, 2005 read: “I’m sick of the political correctness on the Māori language on TV One, the propaganda channel. I was born in Whakatane in 1935 not Farcartarnee, I lived in Kerikeri in the 1940s not Careecaree, have travelled to Kaikoura not Kaicara, lived in Whangarei not Phongaray and have travelled up the Wanganui river not the Fonganooeee river. Let’s get this PC bull out the back door and speak Maori as it is spelled, not Helengrad [a reference to Helen Clark, then Prime Minister] style ” – Terry Darby, Avondale.

□ Incidentally, in the 1966 *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, Professor Arnold Wall wrote: ‘The Māori place names, in spite of an admirable system of perfectly phonetic spelling, are often most gravely mutilated and mispronounced’. (Quoted in *Finding a New Zealand Voice* – Gordon and Deverson (p52).)

¹³² *The New Zealand Herald* 27 August, 2005

¹³³ Ole Andreasen [ELDR] (DA) 4 September 2001

¹³⁴ This complaint of language discrimination under the Human Rights Act that was reported by the Complaints Division of the Human Rights Commission: K v G C2253/96 (RRO) (from HRC website, <http://www.hrc.co.nz>; also reported in *Human Rights Law and Practice* (1997) 3: 212): Complaints Division Opinion, 18 February 1997 [Race discrimination - goods and services - less favourable treatment because of using the Māori language – s 44(1)(b) Human Rights Act 1993] is discussed in Lane op cit (p 93)

¹³⁵ Viviane Reding 12 April 2000

¹³⁶ Marianne Eriksson (SV), Pernille Frahm (DA), Herman Schmid (SV), Esko Seppänen (SU) and Jonas Sjöstedt (SV) – all GUE/NGL 13 April 2000

¹³⁷ Spolsky op cit (p 81)

¹³⁸ Eruera Tarena in *The Press*, Christchurch, 1 August 2008

The *Sunday Star Times* (6 April 2008) reported that a billboard erected by Ace Car Rentals on 6 March including the words “So You Can Visit Any Whaka” ended in anger and angst when the firm ‘received a sternly disapproving email from the Māori Language Commission. “The presence of this billboard proves that in some sectors of New Zealand society, ignorance and lack of regard for Māori language persist,” Huhana Rokx, Commission CEO, said in a statement.’

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APPENDIX 1

THE 552 SELECTED *VERBALI* FROM THE PLENARY DEBATES 2000 - 2003

[**Column One:** Selected *Verbali* Number; **Column Two:** Date and day of the week; **Column Three:** Actor and (in the case of an elected Member of the European Parliament) Member State; **Column Four:** Political Grouping; **Column Five:** Language used - where indicated - in the debating chamber. (w) = in writing.]

Political Groupings

EDD = Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities

ELDR = Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party

GUE/NGL = Confederal Group of the European United Left / Nordic Green Left

NI = Non-attached

PPE-DE = Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

PSE = Group of the Party of European Socialists

TDI = Technical Group of Independent Members – mixed group

UEN = Union for Europe of the Nations Group

Verts/ALE = Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

1	18/02/2000(F)	Morgan, Ms Eluned UK	PSE	EN
2	17/03/2000(F)	Gallagher, Pat the Cope IR	UEN	EN
3	12/04/2000(W)	Graça Moura, Vasco PT	PPE-DE	PT
4	12/04/2000(W)	Pack, Ms, Doris DE	PPE-DE	DE
5	12/04/2000(W)	Prets, Ms, Christa OS	PSE	DE
6	12/04/2000(W)	Andreasen, Ole DA	ELDR	DA
7	12/04/2000(W)	Vander Taelen, Luckas BE	Verts/ALE	NL
8	12/04/2000(W)	Fraisse, Ms Geneviève FR	GUE/NGL	FR
9	12/04/2000(W)	Marinos, Ioannis HE	PPE-DE	EL
10	12/04/2000(W)	Paasilinna, Reino SU	PSE	FI
11	12/04/2000(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
12	12/04/2000(W)	Gutiérrez, Ms Cristina ES	PPE-DE	ES
13	12/04/2000(W)	Poignant, Bernard FR	PSE	FR
14	12/04/2000(W)	Klass, Ms Christa DE	PPE-DE	DE
15	12/04/2000(W)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
16	13/04/2000(Th)	Fatuzzo, Carlo IT	PPE-DE	IT
17	13/04/2000(Th)	Gorostiaga, Koldo ES	NI	PT
18	13/04/2000(Th)	Caudron, Gérard FR	PSE	FR(w)
19	13/04/2000(Th)	Eriksson, Ms Marianne SV et 4al	GUE/NGL	SV(w)
20	13/04/2000(Th)	Van Brempt, Ms Kathleen BE	PSE	NL(w)
21	13/04/2000(Th)	Zimeray, François FR	PSE	FR(w)
22	14/04/2000(F)	Marinos, Ioannis HE	PPE-DE	EL
23	14/04/2000(F)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
24	16/06/2000(F)	Thors, Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV

25	3/07/2000(M)	Schroedter, Ms Elisabeth DE	Verts/ALE	DE
26	4/07/2000(Tu)	Chirac, Jacques FR	Pr of France	FR
27	4/07/2000(Tu)	Ford, Glyn UK	PSE	EN
28	5/07/2000(W)	Langen, Werner DE	PPE-DE	DE
29	5/07/2000(W)	Kauppi, Piia-Noora SU	PPE-DE	FI
30	5/07/2000(W)	Wuermeling, Joachim DE	PPE-DE	DE
31	5/07/2000(W)	De Clerq, Willy C.E.H BE	ELDR	NL
32	5/07/2000(W)	Bolkestein, Frits NL	Commission	
33	5/07/2000(W)	Junker, Ms Karin DE	PSE	DE
34	5/07/2000(W)	Andreasen, Ole DA	ELDR	DA
35	5/07/2000(W)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
36	6/07/2000(Th)	Figueiredo, Ms Ilda PT	GUE/NGL	PT(w)
37	5/09/2000(Tu)	Veltroni, Walter IT	PSE	IT
38	5/09/2000(Tu)	Iivari, Ms Ulpu SU	PSE	FI
39	5/09/2000(Tu)	Thors, Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV
40	5/09/2000(Tu)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
41	5/09/2000(Tu)	Heaton-Harris, Christopher UK	PPE-DE	EN
42	6/09/2000(W)	Alavanos, Alexandros HE	GUE/NGL	EL(w)
43	6/09/2000(W)	Caudron, Gérard FR	PSE	FR(w)
44	8/09/2000(F)	Klass, Ms Christa DE	PPE-DE	DE
45	8/09/2000(F)	Echerer, Ms Raina OS	Verts/ALE	DE
46	8/09/2000(F)	Rübig, Paul OS	PPE-DE	DE
47	8/09/2000(F)	Barnier, Michel FR	Commission	FR
48	20/09/2000(W)	Thors, Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV
49	21/09/2000(Th)	Díez, Ms Rosa ES	PSE	ES
50	21/09/2000(Th)	Gorostiaga, Koldo ES	NI	PT
51	21/09/2000(Th)	Karamanou, Ms Anna HE	PSE	EL
52	2/10/2000(M)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
53	3/10/2000(Tu)	Collins, Gerard IR	UEN	EN
54	3/10/2000(Tu)	Butel, Yves FR	EDD	FR
55	3/10/2000(Tu)	Gorostiaga, Koldo ES	NI	PT
56	3/10/2000(Tu)	Paciotti, Ms Elena IT	PSE	IT
57	3/10/2000(Tu)	Wiersma, Jan NL	PSE	NL
58	3/10/2000(Tu)	Gollnisch, Bruno FR	TDI	FR
59	3/10/2000(Tu)	Gomolka, Alfred DE	PPE-DE	DE
60	3/10/2000(Tu)	Maes, Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
61	4/10/2000(W)	Kauppi, Piia-Noora SU	PPE-DE	FI(w)
62	4/10/2000(W)	Fatuzzo, Carlo IT	PPE-DE	IT
63	4/10/2000(W)	Diamantopoulou, Ms Anna HE	Commission	
64	4/10/2000(W)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
65	4/10/2000(W)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
66	4/10/2000(W)	Martens, Ms Maria NL	PPE-DE	NL
67	4/10/2000(W)	Sbarbati, Ms Luciana IT	ELDR	IT
68	4/10/2000(W)	Karas, Othmar OS	PPE-DE	DE

69	5/10/2000(Th)	Caudron, Gérard FR	PSE	FR(w)
70	5/10/2000(Th)	Legendijk, Joost NL	Verts/ALE	NL
71	5/10/2000(Th)	Swoboda, Johannes OS	PSE	DE
72	5/10/2000(Th)	Verheugen, Günter DE	Commission	DE
73	27/10/2000(F)	Karas, Othmar OS	PPE-DE	DE
74	27/10/2000(F)	Papayannakis, Mihail HE	GUE/NGL	EL(w)
75	14/11/2000(Tu)	Tannock, Charles UK	PPE-DE	DE
76	14/11/2000(Tu)	Berthu, Georges FR	UEN	FR(w)
77	14/11/2000(Tu)	Thors,Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV
78	15/11/2000(W)	Berthu, Georges FR	UEN	FR
79	15/11/2000(W)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
80	17/11/2000(F)	Aparicio, Pedro ES	PSE	ES
81	29/11/2000(W)	Wurtz, Francis FR	GUE/NGL	FR
82	30/11/2000(Th)	Montfort,Ms Elizabeth FR	UEN	FR
83	11/12/2000(M)	Byrne, David IR	Commission	
84	12/12/2000(Tu)	Baltas, Alexandros HE	PSE	EL
85	13/12/2000(W)	Gill,Ms Neena UK	PSE	EN
86	13/12/2000(W)	Fraisse,Ms Geneviève FR	GUE/NGL	FR
87	13/12/2000(W)	Seppänen, Esko Olavi SU	GUE/NGL	FI
88	13/12/2000(W)	Echerer,Ms Raina OS	Verts/ALE	DE
89	13/12/2000(W)	Hieronimi,Ms Ruth DE	PPE-DE	DE
90	13/12/2000(W)	Caudron, Gérard FR	PSE	FR
91	14/12/2000(Th)	Caudron, Gérard FR	PSE	FR
92	14/12/2000(Th)	Belder, Bastiaan NL	EDD	FR(w)
93	14/12/2000(Th)	Caveri, Luciano IT	ELDR	FR(w)
94	14/12/2000(Th)	Martin, David UK	PSE	(w)
95	14/12/2000(Th)	Montfort,Ms Elizabeth FR	UEN	FR(w)
96	15/01/2001(M)	Caveri, Luciano IT	ELDR	IT
97	16/01/2001(Tu)	Eriksson,Ms Marianne SV	GUE/NGL	SV
98	18/01/2001(Th)	Schmid, Herman SV	GUE/NGL	SV
99	18/01/2001(Th)	Smet,Ms Miet BE	PPE-DE	NL
100	1/02/2001(Th)	Ludford,Ms Sarah UK	ELDR	(w)
101	1/02/2001(Th)	O'Toole,Ms Barbara UK	PSE	EN
102	1/02/2001(Th)	Graça Moura, Vasco PT	PPE-DE	PT
103	1/02/2001(Th)	Figueiredo,Ms Ilda PT	GUE/NGL	PT(w)
104	1/02/2001(Th)	Wyn, Eurig UK	Verts/ALE	(w)
105	12/02/2001(M)	Bouwman, Theodorus NL	Verts/ALE	NL
106	13/02/2001(Tu)	Marinho, Luis PT	PSE	PT
107	13/02/2001(Tu)	Kinnock,Neil UK	Commission	
108	13/02/2001(Tu)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT
109	14/02/2001(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
110	14/02/2001(W)	Swoboda , Johannes OS	PSE	DE
111	14/02/2001(W)	Katiforis, Giorgis HE	PSE	EL
112	14/02/2001(W)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)

113	15/02/2001(Th)	Fraisse,Ms Geneviève FR	GUE/NGL	FR
114	15/02/2001(Th)	Posselt, Bernd DE	GUE/NGL	FR
115	28/02/2001(W)	Gorostiaga, Koldo ES	NI	PT
116	1/03/2001(Th)	Figueiredo,Ms Ilda PT	GUE/NGL	PT(w)
117	12/03/2001(M)	Andreasen, Ole DA	ELDR	DA
118	13/03/2001(Tu)	Alavanos, Alexandros HE	GUE/NGL	EL
119	13/03/2001(Tu)	Thors,Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV
120	13/03/2001(Tu)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
121	13/03/2001(Tu)	Ferrer,Ms Concepció ES	PPE-DE	ES
122	13/03/2001(Tu)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
123	13/03/2001(Tu)	Thors,Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV
124	13/03/2001(Tu)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
125	13/03/2001(Tu)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
126	13/03/2001(Tu)	Ferrer,Ms Concepció ES	PPE-DE	ES
127	13/03/2001(Tu)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
128	14/03/2001(W)	Berès,Ms Pervenche FR	PSE	FR
129	14/03/2001(W)	Rübig, Paul OS	PPE-DE	DE
130	15/03/2001(Th)	Fatuzzo, Carlo IT	PPE-DE	IT
131	15/03/2001(Th)	Gahrton, Per SV	Verts/ALE	SV
132	3/04/2001(Tu)	Perry, Roy UK	PPE-DE	EN
133	3/04/2001(Tu)	Stenmarck, Per SV	PPE-DE	SV
134	4/04/2001(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
135	4/04/2001(W)	Danielsson, Christian SV	Council	SV
136	5/04/2001(Th)	Staes, Bart BE	Verts/ALE	NL
137	5/04/2001(Th)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
138	2/05/2001(W)	Swoboda, Johannes OS	PSE	DE
139	3/05/2001(Th)	Krivine Fr, Vachetta,Ms FR	GUE/NGL	SV(w)
140	3/05/2001(Th)	Krivine Fr, Vachetta,Ms FR	GUE/NGL	SV(w)
141	14/05/2001(M)	Martens,Ms Maria NL	PPE-DE	NL
142	14/05/2001(M)	Alavanos, Alexandros HE	GUE/NGL	EL
143	14/05/2001(M)	Perry, Roy UK	PPE-DE	EN
144	14/05/2001(M)	De Clerq, Willy BE	PPE-DE	NL
145	14/05/2001(M)	Pack,Ms, Doris DE	PPE-DE	DE
146	14/05/2001(M)	O'Toole,Ms Barbara UK	PSE	EN
147	14/05/2001(M)	Korakas, Efstratios HE	GUE/NGL	EL
148	14/05/2001(M)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
149	15/05/2001(Tu)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
150	16/05/2001(W)	Gill,Ms Neena UK	PSE	EN
151	16/05/2001(W)	Danielsson, Christian SV	Council	SV
152	16/05/2001(W)	Napoletano,Ms Pasqualina IT	PSE	IT
153	17/05/2001(Th)	van den Bos, Bob NL	ELDR	NL
154	17/05/2001(Th)	Boudjenah,Ms Yasmine FR	GUE/NGL	FR
155	17/05/2001(Th)	McCartin, John Joseph IR	PPE-DE	EN
156	12/06/2001(Tu)	Rod, Didier FR	Verts/ALE	FR

157	12/06/2001(Tu)	Podestà, Guido IT	PPE-DE	IT
158	12/06/2001(Tu)	Danielsson, Cristian SV	Council	SV
159	12/06/2001(Tu)	Podestà, Guido IT	PPE-DE	IT
160	13/06/2001(W)	Pöttering, Hans-Gert DE	PPE-DE	DE
161	13/06/2001(W)	Podestà, Guido IT	PPE-DE	IT
162	13/06/2001(W)	Kinnock, Neil UK	Commission	
163	13/06/2001(W)	Gawronski, Jas IT	PPE-DE	IT
164	13/06/2001(W)	Rübig, Paul OS	PPE-DE	DE
165	13/06/2001(W)	Kinnock, Neil UK	Commission	
166	3/07/2001(Tu)	Sacrédeus, Lennart SV	PPE-DE	SV
167	3/07/2001(Tu)	Monti, Mario IT	Commission	
168	4/07/2001(W)	Thyssen,Ms Marianne BE	PPE-DE	NL
169	4/07/2001(W)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
170	4/07/2001(W)	Borghezio, Mario IT	TDI	IT
171	4/07/2001(W)	Coelho, Carlos PT	PPE-DE	PT
172	4/07/2001(W)	Neyts-Uytebroeck, Ms Annemie BE	Council	FR
173	4/07/2001(W)	Nogueira, Camilo ES	Verts/ALE	PT
174	4/07/2001(W)	Neyts-Uytebroeck, Ms Annemie BE	Council	FR
175	4/07/2001(W)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	ES
176	4/07/2001(W)	Neyts-Uytebroeck, Ms Annemie BE	Council	FR
177	5/07/2001(Th)	Zorba,Ms Myrsini HE	PSE	EL
178	5/07/2001(Th)	Wuermeling, Joachim DE	PPE-DE	DE
179	5/07/2001(Th)	Gallagher, Pat the Cope IR	UEN	(w)
180	5/07/2001(Th)	Valdevielso, Jaime ES	PPE-DE	ES
181	3/09/2001(M)	Mann, Thomas DE	PPE-DE	DE
182	3/09/2001(M)	Dell'Alba, Gianfranco IT	TDI	EN/IT
183	3/09/2001(M)	Kinnock, Neil UK	Commission	
184	4/09/2001(Tu)	Schroedter,Ms ElisabethDE	Verts/ALE	DE
185	4/09/2001(Tu)	Maes,Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
186	4/09/2001(Tu)	Böge, Reimer DE	PPE-DE	DE
187	4/09/2001(Tu)	Prodi, Romano IT	Commission	IT
188	4/09/2001(Tu)	Souladakis, Ioannis HE	PSE	EL
189	4/09/2001(Tu)	Ruffolo, Giorgio IT	PSE	IT
190	4/09/2001(Tu)	Andreasen, Ole DA	ELDR	DA
191	4/09/2001(Tu)	Aparicio, Pedro ES	PSE	ES
192	5/09/2001(W)	Uca,Ms Felekna DE	GUE/NGL	DE
193	5/09/2001(W)	Caudron, Gérard FR	PSE	FR(w)
194	5/09/2001(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
195	5/09/2001(W)	Fatuzzo, Carlo IT	PPE-DE	IT
196	5/09/2001(W)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL
197	6/09/2001(Th)	González,Ms Laura ES	GUE/NGL	ES
198	6/09/2001(Th)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	ES
199	2/10/2001(Tu)	Maes,Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
200	2/10/2001(Tu)	Verheugen, Günter DE	Commission	DE

201	2/10/2001(Tu)	Van Hecke, Johan BE	PPE-DE	NL
202	3/10/2001(W)	Wyn, Eurig UK	Verts/ALE	EN
203	3/10/2001(W)	Paasilinna, Reino SU	PSE	FI
304	3/10/2001(W)	Bonde, Jens-Peter DA	EDD	DA
205	3/10/2001(W)	Staes, Bart BE	Verts/ALE	NL
206	3/10/2001(W)	Neyts-Uytebroeck, Ms Annemie BE	Council	NL
207	3/10/2001(W)	Staes, Bart BE	Verts/ALE	NL
208	3/10/2001(W)	MacCormick, Neil UK	Verts/ALE	EN
209	4/10/2001(Th)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL
210	4/10/2001(Th)	Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Ms Rodi HE	PPE-DE	EL
211	4/10/2001(Th)	Neyts-Uytebroeck, Ms Annemie BE	Council	NL
212	22/10/2001(M)	Korhola, Eija-Riitta SU	PPE-DE	FI
213	23/10/2001(Tu)	Gill, Ms Neena UK	PSE	EN
214	23/10/2001(Tu)	van Dam, Rijk NL	EDD	NL
215	24/10/2001(W)	Lamassoure, Alain FR	PPE-DE	FR
216	24/10/2001(W)	Swoboda, Johannes OS	PSE	DE
217	24/10/2001(W)	Uca, Ms Felekna DE	GUE/NGL	DE
218	24/10/2001(W)	Fava, Giovanni IT	PSE	IT
219	24/10/2001(W)	Carnero, Carlos ES	PSE	ES
220	25/10/2001(Th)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
221	12/11/2001(M)	Thors, Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV
222	12/11/2001(M)	Sanders-ten Holte, Ms Maria NL	ELDR	NL
223	13/11/2001(Tu)	Collins, Gerard IR	UEN	EN
224	13/11/2001(Tu)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
225	13/11/2001(Tu)	MacCormick, Neil UK	Verts/ALE	EN
226	13/11/2001(Tu)	Marinos, Ioannis HE	PPE-DE	EL
227	13/11/2001(Tu)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
228	28/11/2001(W)	Thyssen, Ms Marianne BE	PPE-DE	NL
229	28/11/2001(W)	Caveri, Luciano IT	ELDR	IT
230	29/11/2001(Th)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
231	11/12/2001(Tu)	Gill, Ms Neena UK	PSE	EN
232	12/12/2001(W)	Neyts-Uytebroeck, Ms Annemie BE	Council	NL
233	12/12/2001(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
234	12/12/2001(W)	Neyts-Uytebroeck, Ms Annemie BE	Council	FR
235	12/12/2001(W)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	ES
236	13/12/2001(Th)	Morgan, Ms Eluned UK	PSE	EN
237	13/12/2001(Th)	Wyn, Eurig UK	Verts/ALE	EN
238	13/12/2001(Th)	Nielson, Poul DA	Commission	EN
239	13/12/2001(Th)	Pack, Ms, Doris DE	PPE-DE	DE
240	13/12/2001(Th)	Esteve, Pere ES	ELDR	ES
241	13/12/2001(Th)	Posselt, Bernd DE	PPE-DE	DE
242	13/12/2001(Th)	Lulling, Ms Astrid LU	PPE-DE	FR
243	13/12/2001(Th)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
244	13/12/2001(Th)	Fatuzzo, Carlo IT	PPE-DE	IT

245	13/12/2001(Th)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
246	17/12/2001(M)	Verhofstadt, Guy BE	Council	FR
247	17/12/2001(M)	Caveri, Luciano IT	ELDR	IT
248	17/12/2001(M)	Vanhecke, Frank BE	NI	NL
249	15/01/2002(Tu)	Bonde, Jens-Peter DA	EDD	DA
250	15/01/2002(Tu)	Cox, Pat IR	ELDR	EN,GA
251	15/01/2002(Tu)	Onesta, Gérard FR	Verts/ALE	FR
252	15/01/2002(Tu)	Bonde, Jens-Peter DA	EDD	DA
253	15/01/2002(Tu)	Sylla, Fodé FR	GUE/NGL	FR
254	16/01/2002(W)	Gorostiaga, Koldo ES	NI	PT
255	16/01/2002(W)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
256	17/01/2002(Th)	Katiforis, Giorgis HE	PSE	EN
257	17/01/2002(Th)	Cerdeira,Ms Carmen ES	PSE	ES
258	4/02/2002(M)	Ludford,Ms SarahUK	ELDR	EN
259	4/02/2002(M)	Klamt,Ms Eva DE	PPE-DE	DE
260	4/02/2002(M)	Evans, Robert JE UK	PSE	EN
261	5/02/2002(Tu)	Alavanos, Alexandros HE	GUE/NGL	EN
262	5/02/2002(Tu)	Kauppi, Piia-Noora SU	PPE-DE	FI
263	5/02/2002(Tu)	Martens,Ms MariaNL	PPE-DE	NL
264	5/02/2002(Tu)	Ilgenfritz, Wolfgang OS	NI	DE
265	7/02/2002(Th)	Diamantopoulou, Ms Anna HE	Commission	EL
266	7/02/2002(Th)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
267	27/02/2002(W)	Mann, Thomas DE	PPE-DE	DE
268	27/02/2002(W)	Berthu, Georges FR	NI	FR
269	27/02/2002(W)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
270	27/02/2002(W)	de Miguel, Ramón ES	Council	ES
271	27/02/2002(W)	Lagendijk, Joost NL	Verts/ALE	NL
272	27/02/2002(W)	Gorostiaga, Koldo ES	NI	
273	27/02/2002(W)	Uca,Ms Felekna DE	GUE/NGL	DE
274	28/02/2002(Th)	Sanders-ten Holte,Ms Maria NL	ELDR	NL
275	28/02/2002(Th)	Wyn, Eurig UK	Verts/ALE	
276	28/02/2002(Th)	Echerer,Ms Raina OS	Verts/ALE	DE
277	28/02/2002(Th)	de La Perriere, Thierry FR	NI	FR
278	28/02/2002(Th)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
279	28/02/2002(Th)	Mussa, Giovanni IT	UEN	IT
280	28/02/2002(Th)	Perry, Roy UK	PPE-DE	EN
281	28/02/2002(Th)	Korakas, Efstratios HE	GUE/NGL	EL
282	28/02/2002(Th)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
283	11/03/2002(M)	Andreasen, Ole DA	ELDR	DA
284	11/03/2002(M)	Bolkestein, Frits NL	Commission	
285	12/03/2002(Tu)	Stenmarck, Per SV	PPE-DE	SV
286	12/03/2002(Tu)	Podestà, Guido IT	PPE-DE	IT
287	12/03/2002(Tu)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
288	13/03/2002(W)	Bonde, Jens-Peter DA	EDD	DA

289	13/03/2002(W)	Böge, Reimer DE	PPE-DE	DE
290	13/03/2002(W)	Podestà, Guido IT	PPE-DE	IT
291	13/03/2002(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
292	13/03/2002(W)	de Miguel, Ramón ES	Council	ES
293	13/03/2002(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
294	13/03/2002(W)	de Miguel, Ramón ES	Council	ES
295	13/03/2002(W)	Cashman, Michael UK	PSE	EN
296	14/03/2002(Th)	Schroedter, Ms Elisabeth DE	Verts/ALE	DE
297	14/03/2002(Th)	Sacrédeus, Lennart SV	PPE-DE	SV
298	14/03/2002(Th)	Wiersma, Jan NL	PSE	NL
299	14/03/2002(Th)	Posselt, Bernd DE	PPE-DE	DE
300	14/03/2002(Th)	Bowis, John UK	PPE-DE	EN
301	20/03/2002(W)	Aznar Lopez, José ES	Council	ES
302	20/03/2002(W)	Van Brempt, Ms Kathleen BE	PSE	NL
303	9/04/2002(Tu)	Palacio, Ms Ana ES	PPE-DE	ES
304	9/04/2002(Tu)	Medina, Manuel ES	PSE	ES
305	9/04/2002(Tu)	Manders, Toine NL	ELDR	NL
306	9/04/2002(Tu)	MacCormick, Neil UK	Verts/ALE	EN
307	9/04/2002(Tu)	Vanhecke, Frank BE	NI	NL
308	9/04/2002(Tu)	Thors, Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV
309	9/04/2002(Tu)	Maes, Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
310	9/04/2002(Tu)	Figueiredo, Ms Ilda PT	GUE/NGL	PT
311	9/04/2002(Tu)	Fourtou, Ms Janelly FR	PPE-DE	FR
312	9/04/2002(Tu)	Koukiadis, Ioannis HE	PSE	EL
313	9/04/2002(Tu)	Thyssen, Ms Marianne BE	PPE-DE	NL
314	9/04/2002(Tu)	Bartolozzi, Paolo IT	PPE-DE	IT
315	9/04/2002(Tu)	Bolkestein, Frits NL	Commission	
316	10/04/2002(W)	Nogueira, Camilo ES	Verts/ALE	PT
317	10/04/2002(W)	Andersson, Jan et 6 al SV	PSE	SV(w)
318	10/04/2002(W)	Dehousse, Jean-Maurice BG	PSE	FR(w)
319	10/04/2002(W)	Manders, Toine NL	ELDR	NL(w)
320	10/04/2002(W)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR(w)
321	10/04/2002(W)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
322	10/04/2002(W)	Tannock, Charles UK	PPE-DE	EN
323	11/04/2002(Th)	De Sarnez, Ms Marielle FR	PPE-DE	FR
324	11/04/2002(Th)	Pack, Ms, Doris DE	PPE-DE	DE
325	11/04/2002(Th)	Martens, Ms Maria NL	PPE-DE	NL
326	11/04/2002(Th)	Sbarbati, Ms Luciana IT	ELDR	IT
327	11/04/2002(Th)	Zabell, Ms Theresa ES	PPE-DE	ES
328	11/04/2002(Th)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
329	11/04/2002(Th)	Titely, Gary UK	PSE	EN
330	11/04/2002(Th)	Schroedter, Ms Elisabeth DE	Verts/ALE	DE
331	11/04/2002(Th)	Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Ms Rodi HE	PPE-DE	EL
332	11/04/2002(Th)	Maes, Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL

333	13/05/2002(M)	Prets,Ms, Christa OS	PSE	DE
334	13/05/2002(M)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
335	14/05/2002(Tu)	Gill,Ms Neena UK	PSE	EN
336	14/05/2002(Tu)	Virrankowski, Kyösti SU	ELDR	FI
337	14/05/2002(Tu)	Watson, Graham UK	ELDR	EN
338	15/05/2002(W)	Sacrédeus, Lennart SV	PPE-DE	SV
339	15/05/2002(W)	Swoboda, Johannes OS	PSE	DE
340	16/05/2002(Th)	Evans,Ms Jillian UK	Verts/ALE	EN
341	16/05/2002(Th)	Nogueira, Camilo ES	Verts/ALE	PT
342	16/05/2002(Th)	Ferrer,Ms Concepció ES	PPE-DE	ES(w)
343	16/05/2002(Th)	Figueiredo,Ms Ilda PT	GUE/NGL	PT(w)
344	10/06/2002(M)	Malmström,Ms Cecilia SV	ELDR	SV
345	10/06/2002(M)	Maes,Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
346	10/06/2002(M)	Posselt, Bernd DE	PPE-DE	DE
347	10/06/2002(M)	Corbett, Richard UK	PSE	EN
348	10/06/2002(M)	Alyssandrakis, Konstantinos HE	GUE/NGL	EL
349	11/06/2002(Tu)	McCarthy,Ms Arlene UK	PSE	EN
350	11/06/2002(Tu)	Staes, Bart BE	Verts/ALE	NL
351	12/06/2002(W)	Alavanos, Alexandros HE	GUE/NGL	EL
352	12/06/2002(W)	Alavanos, Alexandros HE	GUE/NGL	EL(w)
353	12/06/2002(W)	Iivari,Ms Ulpu SU	PSE	FI
354	13/06/2002(Th)	Staes, Bart BE	Verts/ALE	NL
355	13/06/2002(Th)	Wuori, Matti SU	Verts/ALE	FI
356	1/07/2002(M)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
357	2/07/2002(Tu)	Seppänen, Esko SU	GUE/NGL	FI
358	2/07/2002(Tu)	Coûteaux, Paul FR	EDD	FR
359	3/07/2002(W)	Gahler, Michael DE	PPE-DE	DE
360	3/07/2002(W)	Ó Neachtain, Seán IR	UEN	GA,EN
361	3/07/2002(W)	Papayannakis, Mihail HE	GUE/NGL	EL
362	3/07/2002(W)	Borghezio, Mario IT	NI	IT
363	3/09/2002(Tu)	Maes,Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
364	3/09/2002(Tu)	Vairinhos, Joaquim PT	PSE	PT
365	4/09/2002(W)	Coelho, Carlos PT	PPE-DE	PT
366	4/09/2002(W)	Vitorino, Antonio PT	Commission	PT
367	5/09/2002(Th)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
368	5/09/2002(Th)	De Sarnez,Ms Marielle FR	PPE-DE	FR
369	5/09/2002(Th)	Sbarbati,Ms Luciana IT	ELDR	IT
370	5/09/2002(Th)	Wyn, Eurig UK	Verts/ALE	EN
371	5/09/2002(Th)	Gollnisch , Bruno FR	NI	FR
372	5/09/2002(Th)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
373	24/09/2002(Tu)	Seppänen, Esko SU	GUE/NGL	FI
374	24/09/2002(Tu)	Echerer,Ms Raina OS	Verts/ALE	DE
375	24/09/2002(Tu)	MacCormick, Neil UK	Verts/ALE	EN
376	24/09/2002(Tu)	Wuermeling, Joachim DE	PPE-DE	DE

377	24/09/2002(Tu)	Medina, Manuel ES	PSE	ES
378	26/09/2002(Th)	Perry, Roy UK	PPE-DE	EN
379	26/09/2002(Th)	Söderman, Jacob-Magnus SU	Ombudsman	SV
380	9/10/2002(W)	Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Ms Rodi HE	PPE-DE	EL
381	9/10/2002(W)	Hjort Frederiksen, Claus DA	Council	DA
382	9/10/2002(W)	Diamantopoulou, Ms Anna HE	Commission	EL
383	9/10/2002(W)	Prodi, Romano IT	Commission	IT
384	10/10/2002(Th)	De Sarnez, Ms Marielle FR	PPE-DE	FR(w)
385	10/10/2002(Th)	Figueiredo, Ms Ilda PT	GUE/NGL	PT(w)
386	21/10/2002(M)	Fraisse, Ms Geneviève FR	GUE/NGL	FR
387	19/11/2002(Tu)	Haarder, Bertel DA	Council	DA
388	19/11/2002(Tu)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT
389	19/11/2002(Tu)	Coûteaux, Paul FR	EDD	FR
390	19/11/2002(Tu)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
391	16/12/2002(M)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
392	17/12/2002(Tu)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT(w)
393	18/12/2002(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
394	18/12/2002(W)	Haarder, Bertel DA	Council	DA
395	18/12/2002(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
396	18/12/2002(W)	Haarder, Bertel DA	Council	DA
397	19/12/2002(Th)	Mann, Thomas DE	PPE-DE	DE
398	19/12/2002(Th)	Krarup, Ole DA	EDD	DA
399	19/12/2002(Th)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
400	19/12/2002(Th)	Korakas, Efstratios HE	GUE/NGL	EL
401	13/01/2003(M)	Méndez de Vigo, Iñigo ES	PPE-DE	ES
402	13/01/2003(M)	Ó Neachtain, Seán IR	UEN	EN
403	13/01/2003(M)	Costa, Paolo IT	ELDR	IT
404	13/01/2003(M)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL
405	13/01/2003(M)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT(w)
406	14/01/2003(Tu)	Marques, Sérgio PT	PPE-DE	PT(w)
407	14/01/2003(Tu)	Pasqua, Charles FR	UEN	FR(w)
408	14/01/2003(Tu)	Queiró, Luis PT	UEN	PT(w)
409	15/01/2003(W)	Sanders-ten Holte, Ms Maria NL	ELDR	NL(w)
410	10/02/2003(M)	Seppänen, Esko SU	GUE/NGL	FI
411	12/02/2003(W)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
412	13/02/2003(Th)	Ó Neachtain, Seán IR	UEN	EN
413	10/03/2003(M)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
414	10/03/2003(M)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
415	10/03/2003(M)	Galeote, Gerardo ES	PPE-DE	ES
416	11/03/2003(Tu)	Seppänen, Esko SU	GUE/NGL	FI
417	11/03/2003(Tu)	Dover, Den UK	PPE-DE	EN
418	11/03/2003(Tu)	Virrankowski, Kyösti SU	ELDR	FI
419	11/03/2003(Tu)	Evans, Robert JE UK	PSE	EN
420	11/03/2003(Tu)	Verheugen, Günter DE	Commission	DE

421	13/03/2003(Th)	Fitzsimons, James IR	UEN	EN
422	20/03/2003(Th)	Coûteaux, Paul FR	EDD	FR
423	20/03/2003(Th)	Papandreou, Giorgos HE	Council	EL
424	26/03/2003(W)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
425	7/04/2003(M)	De Sarnez, Ms Marielle FR	PPE-DE	FR
426	7/04/2003(M)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
427	7/04/2003(M)	Iivari, Ms Ulpu SU	PSE	FI
428	7/04/2003(M)	Sanders-ten Holte, Ms Maria NL	ELDR	NL
429	7/04/2003(M)	Fraisse, Ms Geneviève FR	GUE/NGL	FR
430	7/04/2003(M)	Echerer, Ms, Raina OS	Verts/ALE	DE
431	7/04/2003(M)	Hyland, Liam IR	UEN	EN
432	7/04/2003(M)	Pack, Ms, Doris DE	PPE-DE	DE
433	7/04/2003(M)	Prets, Ms, Christa OS	PSE	DE
434	7/04/2003(M)	Nordmann, Jean-Thomas FR	ELDR	FR
435	7/04/2003(M)	Wyn, Eurig UK	Verts/ALE	EN
436	7/04/2003(M)	Zabell, Ms Theresa ES	PPE-DE	ES
437	7/04/2003(M)	Iivari, Ms Ulpu SU	PSE	FI
438	7/04/2003(M)	Zabell, Ms Theresa ES	PPE-DE	ES
439	8/04/2003(Tu)	Bordes, Ms Armonia FR et 2 al	GUE/NGL	FR(w)
440	8/04/2003(Tu)	Bastos, Ms Regina PT	PPE-DE	PT(w)
441	8/04/2003(Tu)	Bayona, Juan ES	PPE-DE	ES
442	8/04/2003(Tu)	Vitorino, Antonio PT	Commission	FR
443	8/04/2003(Tu)	Paasilinna, Reino SU	PSE	FI
444	8/04/2003(Tu)	Gutiérrez, Ms Cristina ES	PPE-DE	ES
445	8/04/2003(Tu)	Trajkovski, Boris	Pr of Macedonia	MA
446	8/04/2003(Tu)	Marchiani, Jean-Charles FR	UEN	FR(w)
447	9/04/2003(W)	Schroedter, Ms Elisabeth DE	Verts/ALE	DE
448	9/04/2003(W)	Maes, Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
449	9/04/2003(W)	Bonde, Jens-Peter DA	EDD	DA
450	9/04/2003(W)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
451	9/04/2003(W)	Andersen, Bent et 7 al		(w)
452	9/04/2003(W)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
453	10/04/2003(Th)	Ferrer, Ms Concepció ES	PPE-DE	ES(w)
454	10/04/2003(Th)	Piscarreta, Joaquim PT	PPE-DE	PT(w)
455	10/04/2003(Th)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT(w)
456	10/04/2003(Th)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	IT
457	12/05/2003(M)	Gorostiaga, Koldo ES	NI	ES
458	12/05/2003(M)	McNally, Ms Eryll UK	PSE	EN
459	13/05/2003(Tu)	Virrankowski, Kyösti SU	ELDR	FI
460	13/05/2003(Tu)	van Dam, Rijk NL	EDD	NL
461	13/05/2003(Tu)	Uca, Ms Felekna DE	GUE/NGL	DE
462	3/06/2003(Tu)	Zrihen, Ms Olga BL	PSE	FR
463	3/06/2003(Tu)	Posselt, Bernd DE	PPE-DE	DE
464	3/06/2003(Tu)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR

465	3/06/2003(Tu)	Posselt, Bernd DE	PPE-DE	DE
466	3/06/2003(Tu)	Evans, Robert JE UK	PSE	EN
467	3/06/2003(Tu)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
468	3/06/2003(Tu)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
469	3/06/2003(Tu)	Vallvé, Joan ES	ELDR	FR
470	3/06/2003(Tu)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
471	3/06/2003(Tu)	Bouteflika, Abdelaziz	Pr of Algeria	FR
472	4/06/2003(W)	Yannitsis, Tassos HE	Council	EL
473	4/06/2003(W)	Van Orden, Geoffrey UK	PPE-DE	EN
474	4/06/2003(W)	Uca,Ms Felekna DE	GUE/NGL	DE
475	4/06/2003(W)	Maes,Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
476	4/06/2003(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
477	5/06/2003(Th)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
478	18/06/2003(W)	MacCormick, Neil UK	Verts/ALE	EN
479	30/06/2003(M)	Villiers,Ms Theresa UK	PPE-DE	EN
480	30/06/2003(M)	Berès,Ms Pervenche FR	PSE	FR
481	2/07/2003(W)	Muscardini,Ms Cristiana IT	UEN	IT
482	2/07/2003(W)	Sudre,Ms Margie FR	PPE-DE	FR
483	3/07/2003(Th)	Krivine, Alain + Vachetta,Ms Roseline FR	GUE/NGL	FR(w)
484	2/09/2003(Tu)	Vermeer, Herman NL	ELDR	NL
485	2/09/2003(Tu)	Diamantopoulou, Ms Anna HE	Commission	EL
486	3/09/2003(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
487	3/09/2003(W)	Hernández Mollar, Jorge ES	PPE-DE	ES
488	3/09/2003(W)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
489	4/09/2003(Th)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE
490	4/09/2003(Th)	Reding, Ms Viviane LU	Commission	FR
491	4/09/2003(Th)	Zabell,Ms Theresa ES	PPE-DE	ES
492	4/09/2003(Th)	Zorba,Ms Myrsini HE	PSE	EL
493	4/09/2003(Th)	Vallvé, Joan ES	ELDR	FR
494	4/09/2003(Th)	Wyn, Eurig UK	Verts/ALE	WE/EN
495	4/09/2003(Th)	Ó Neachtain, Seán IR	UEN	EN
496	4/09/2003(Th)	Esclopé, Alain FR	EDD	FR
497	4/09/2003(Th)	Gollnisch, Bruno FR	NI	FR
498	4/09/2003(Th)	Martens,Ms Maria NL	PPE-DE	NL
499	4/09/2003(Th)	Prets,Ms, Christa OS	PSE	DE
500	4/09/2003(Th)	Thors,Ms Astrid SU	ELDR	SV
501	4/09/2003(Th)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
502	4/09/2003(Th)	Cappato, Marco IT	NI	IT
503	4/09/2003(Th)	Grosch, Mathieu BG	PPE-DE	DE
504	4/09/2003(Th)	Iivari,Ms Ulpu SU	PSE	FI
505	4/09/2003(Th)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
506	4/09/2003(Th)	Ortuondo, Josu ES	Verts/ALE	ES
507	4/09/2003(Th)	Borghezio, Mario IT	NI	IT
508	4/09/2003(Th)	Gahler, Michael DE	PPE-DE	DE

509	4/09/2003(Th)	Obiols i Germà ES	PSE	ES
510	4/09/2003(Th)	MacCormick, Neil UK	Verts/ALE	EN
511	4/09/2003(Th)	Posselt, Bernd DE	PPE-DE	DE
512	4/09/2003(Th)	Caudron, Gérard FR	GUE/NGL	FR(w)
513	4/09/2003(Th)	Claeys, Philip BE	NI	NL(w)
514	4/09/2003(Th)	Gasòliba i Böhm, Carles-Alfred ES	ELDR	ES(w)
515	4/09/2003(Th)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
516	4/09/2003(Th)	Pasqua, Charles FR	UEN	FR(w)
517	4/09/2003(Th)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT(w)
518	4/09/2003(Th)	Berthu, Georges FR	NI	FR(w)
519	4/09/2003(Th)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT(w)
520	4/09/2003(Th)	Patakis, Ioannis HE	GUE/NGL	EL
521	22/09/2003(M)	Vallvé, Joan ES	ELDR	FR
522	24/09/2003(W)	Maes, Ms Nelly BE	Verts/ALE	NL
523	24/09/2003(W)	Gasòliba i Böhm, Carles-Alfred ES	ELDR	ES
524	24/09/2003(W)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
525	24/09/2003(W)	Ferrer, Ms Concepció ES	PPE-DE	ES
526	24/09/2003(W)	Muscardini, Ms Cristiana IT	UEN	IT(w)
527	24/09/2003(W)	Vallvé, Joan ES	ELDR	ES(w)
528	9/10/2003(Th)	Vike-Freiberga, Ms Vaira	Pr of Latvia	LA
529	20/10/2003(M)	Gorostiaga, Koldo ES	NI	ES
530	20/10/2003(M)	García-Orcoyen, Ms Cristina ES	PPE-DE	ES
531	20/10/2003(M)	De Sarnez, Ms Marielle FR	PPE-DE	FR
532	20/10/2003(M)	Pack, Ms, Doris DE	PPE-DE	DE
533	20/10/2003(M)	Rocard, Michel FR	PSE	FR
534	20/10/2003(M)	Sanders-ten Holte, Ms Maria NL	ELDR	NL
535	20/10/2003(M)	Mayol i Raynal, Miquel ES	Verts/ALE	FR
536	20/10/2003(M)	Dillen, Karel BE	NI	NL
537	20/10/2003(M)	Graça Moura, Vasco PT	PPE-DE	PT
538	20/10/2003(M)	Wenzel-Perillo, Ms Brigitte DE	PPE-DE	DE
539	20/10/2003(M)	Iivari, Ms Ulpu SU	PSE	FI
540	20/10/2003(M)	Mann, Thomas DE	PPE-DE	DE
541	20/10/2003(M)	Zorba, Ms Myrsini HE	PSE	EL
542	21/10/2003(Tu)	Meijer, Erik NL	GUE/NGL	NL(w)
543	21/10/2003(Tu)	Bastos, Ms Regina PT	PPE-DE	PT(w)
544	21/10/2003(Tu)	Darras, Ms Danielle FR	PSE	FR(w)
545	21/10/2003(Tu)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT(w)
546	21/10/2003(Tu)	Bastos, Ms Regina PT	PPE-DE	PT(w)
547	21/10/2003(Tu)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT(w)
548	21/10/2003(Tu)	Dover, Den UK	PPE-DE	EN
549	21/10/2003(Tu)	Mulder, Jan NL	ELDR	NL
550	21/10/2003(Tu)	Ribeiro e Castro, José PT	UEN	PT(w)
551	23/10/2003(Th)	Posselt, Bernd DE	PPE-DE	DE
552	6/11/2003(Th)	Ebner, Michl IT	PPE-DE	DE

APPENDIX 2

THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2008

български (Bălgarski) – Bulgarian

Čeština – Czech

Dansk – Danish

Deutsch – German

Eesti – Estonian

Elinika – Greek

English

Español – Spanish

Français – French

Gaeilge – Irish

Italiano – Italian

Latviesu valoda – Latvian

Lietuvių kalba – Lithuanian

Magyar – Hungarian

Malti – Maltese

Nederlands – Dutch

Polski – Polish

Português – Portuguese

Română – Romanian

Slovenčina – Slovak

Slovenščina – Slovene

Suomi – Finnish

Svenska – Swedish

APPENDIX 3

PRESIDENCIES OF THE THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL 2000 – 2003

2000	January - June	 PORTUGAL
	July - December	 FRANCE
2001	January - June	 SWEDEN
	July - December	 BELGIUM
2002	January - June	 SPAIN
	July - December	 DENMARK
2003	January - June	 GREECE
	July - December	 ITALY